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RALPH ELLIOT

A TALE OF THE YEAR EIGHTEEN HUNDRED AND FORTY-EIGHT

CHAPTER XI.

EXTRACT from Ralph Elliot's diary :—

CUSIGNANO BEFORE UDINE. *April 21st, 1848.*

I meant to have kept a diary from the time I left Trieste, but there was so much to do at Gorizia & I cannot go back to put it all down now. There has been a skirmish near Palmanuova, but L. & I saw nothing of it as we were sent on here to make arrangements. This afternoon the guns were firing for two hours on Udine which refuses to surrender. It is a biggish place—walls, towers, & a moat round.

L. & I are in luck. It has rained all day, & we have got a dry sort of cart-shed with open arches in front & plenty of hay to lie on. The farmhouse is occupied by the Colonel & two Majors. This is not half so dirty, and we can have a big fire without being bothered with smoke. Countess is tied up with the chestnut at one end. She is very fit & doesn't pull her shoes off in deep ground. I was afraid she might to-day; Isaac would have got rid of all four, the going was so bad. L. has gone off to Headquarters, & I am writing by the light of the fire & a small olive-oil lamp.

This part of Italy is more like England than the rest I have seen, & it couldn't rain harder in Cumberland. They say the General is unwell. He is a splendid old man to do all he does. . . .

L. has just come back. A message from the town to arrange capitulation. The Archbishop wants peace. L. is fearfully disappointed, but we have orders to take a despatch up to some place in Tyrol. I wish the weather was better. Countess is too light for such heavy ground. Now, I can't keep awake any longer. . . .

The entry ends in a scrawl, and the next three pages are blank, crumpled, and water-stained.

Leaving Udine, that over-easy nut to crack, to the north, Ladislav and Ralph rode by muddy tracks towards Codroipo and the bridge across the Tagliamento.

The rivers of the Veneto have the usual characteristics of Italian streams somewhat accentuated. The Tagliamento's immense width of bed,—green islands and reaches of shingle in summer—was showing its necessity now that spring rains and melting snows had sent down a great volume of greenish-grey water. Ralph thought of the Solway where it broadens to the sea, but this stream had a long way to go yet before it would spread itself through its oozy mouths into the Adriatic. As a precaution, they had skirted the small town of Codroipo, and it was well, for there seemed an unusual stir between it and the bridge.

"Troops, engineers across there. God! the bridge is gone!" said Ladislás, looking through his field-glasses.

From where they were standing, in a grove of budding poplars, the blows of many axes could be heard above the steady murmur of the river, and a confused mass of woodwork down stream showed a clear gap of water reflecting a pale sky.

"He stayed not for brake and he stopped not for stone,
He swam the Esk river where ford there was none."

Must we do that? Because I can't swim," remarked Ralph, who had dismounted and was feeling the mare's legs gently.

"We must get across somehow," said Ladislás. "Higher up it's wider, but there may be a ferry. That means defence and fighting before the army crosses. Well, it's not our business; we have to get up to Cortina d'Ampezzo as quickly as possible."

The bank was not high and of crumbling soft earth, a space of grass-grown silt dotted with poplars between the river and the cultivated land. It was like a day of English spring. The larks rose from the young corn into the grey sky; now and again a gleam of sun jewelled the old bramble-leaves and bowed grass; above all there was a smell of wet earth and growing things very pleasant to a boy with the love of the soil in his blood. Ralph followed Ladislás silently. The idea that he might be shot by a "rebel" volunteer at any moment did not occur to him, but he gathered from Ladislás's unusual quiet that it was better not to whistle as he would have liked. Their horses' hoofs plashed on the wet turf, but there seemed no one at work in the fields to mark their passing. Still the Tagliamento swept below them, widening as it went, and

obviously shallow, for willow bushes rose out of the water, and ripples showed that the flood could do no more than cover the stones in places.

They were approaching a big farm-house, a white-washed solid building with balconies and traces of fresco on its front, after the Venetian manner, surrounding three sides of a large courtyard.

"It's here or nowhere," said Ladislas firmly. He spied the boat-shed at the river-side.

"We can't swim it," objected Ralph, coming out of thoughts of happy spring days and hounds running their hardest over green English fields.

"Who wants to swim? I thought so; a clumsy enough sort of ferry-boat, but it must serve to get over the deep stream. It won't be more than girth-high beyond those bushes. Now, will you punt or hold the horses?" While he spoke Ladislas had jumped off and was cutting the ropes that kept a huge flat-bottomed thing, between a raft and a scow, to the poles of the shed.

"Oh, I'll see to the horses. Countess will follow me anywhere, but the chestnut will be the deuce's own job."

He was; he nearly upset the placid Countess by his unmannerly plunging. In the end, while Ladislas fought with the strength of the stream, and the boat twisted and strained, Ralph hung on to the trembling beast's head like grim death, and forgot everything but the necessity of not being pulled overboard by him. At the moment when the strain seemed almost irresistible and the rocking boat went round with him, a soft muzzle dropped on to his shoulder and a long hair or two tickled his neck. It was Countess, no more closely held than with her rein over his arm, and confident in her man. "You darling," he muttered between his clenched teeth, and he turned his cheek to rub her nose, as his arms took a fresh grip on the chestnut's reins close to the bit. At that moment there was a grating jar; the boat had grounded in a shallow.

"Pull him off, Ralph. Here, give me the reins. Mind the mare!" shouted Ladislas, the water swirling round his riding-boots.

Ralph was in the saddle, and the mare was pawing at the shallow water with dainty disdain, before the chestnut and his master had come to terms, or the boat that had helped them was

lurching off down stream. They had apparently only reached the middle of the river, a place where little grey bushes reared their heads out of the water, and a few logs lay to lee of a great rock, but from the surface of the water it was plain that the deep channel had been crossed. A faint sound made Ralph turn to behold an indignant cultivator on the bank they had left. "They know the boat's gone," he shouted to Ladislav with a laugh.

"Stop plunging, you devil! Has he a gun? Crouch on her neck and come on."

"We ought to have paid for the boat," said Ralph to himself. "The man's perfectly right if he does shoot us."

Notwithstanding the clear reasoning, he crouched as directed; the strongest sense of justice will not convert one into a willing target. It was impossible to pay their debt, and all he could do was to follow the chestnut, now plunging and snorting in the deepening water. The mare, being lighter, had much ado to keep her feet; twice she was fairly swimming, her rider sitting still, letting her have her head, and making his weight as little as possible. Luckily, there was no bank to climb. The swirl of the water grew less, the stones became firm underfoot, and they found themselves on dry land nearly a quarter of a mile down stream from the farm. No shot had followed them, and no peasants were in sight.

"We must rest the horses, and I'm deadly hungry," observed Ralph, dismounting and patting the mare's smoking neck.

"Half an hour, then," said Ladislav. "Are your provisions soaked? I don't want to go to houses more often than is necessary. Down here they are more friendly than in the hills, but one never knows."

The small saddle-bags which each carried were only damp, thanks to their waterproof lining, and both men munched a rough sandwich with the keenest appetite. They had started at the first light, and it was now afternoon. Countess shared her master's bread besides pretending to quarrel over tufts of grass with her friend the chestnut.

"Now up to Spilimbergo, and about there we must find shelter for the night," said Ladislav, consulting his small pocket-map. "To-morrow will be a harder day than this," he went on, "because the climbing will begin; but I'm glad to have crossed the river."

"So am I. I don't like the idea of being drowned. Water's an unchancy thing; give me land, any day."

"I never thought of drowning. Ideas again, Raphael? What a chap you are for them!"

"Well, it's natural, isn't it, to dislike one way of dying more than another? Now I should hate drowning."

"I shall hate any way it comes except a straight bullet in a good fight," said Ladislas, crossing himself to avert evil from mention of the subject. "There's a sort of road beyond this field. I'm going to walk for a bit; my legs are so wet and stiff."

They trudged in silence along the headland of ground prepared for Indian corn, scrambled through a thorny boundary not unlike a bad English fence, and gained the road.

"Do you know, Jellachich thinks he can't be hit?" said Ladislas. "He believes himself to be invulnerable. Albert told me. I wonder if he has any reason, or if it's just devil-may-care courage."

"Any reason?"

"Oh, you'll laugh, I suppose. But there are charms and spells—and amulets. I say, Ralph, will you take an amulet that I know is a good one?"

"Not from you, old man, at the beginning of a campaign when you'll want it if ever you do. Besides, it wouldn't be of any use if I don't believe in it, would it?"

"I don't know; it might. I promised,—I mean, I'm going to look after you as much as I can, you know; and this is a gipsy thing."

"How d'you know it's of any use?"

"Well, twice since I've worn it things have been good for me when other men have come to bad grief. But you won't?"

"No, thanks very much."

"You don't read me a lecture on superstition, any way. That's part of your liberal-mindedness, Raffaello *mio*. Any other Englishman would have."

"It's silly to jeer at what one doesn't understand," said Ralph sententiously; "besides, it's all part of the experiment," he added half to himself.

"The experiment? What experiment?"

"What did I say? Well, everything in general,—all I'm doing and the world at large—is interesting to look at, you know," he explained lamely. Without intending it, he had hit on the con-

stant subconscious thought that all these very amusing matters, including Ladislás and the Austro-Italian war, were a show at which Ralph Elliot was an interested but unconcerned spectator. As in a dream one can shake oneself awake when the tension becomes too severe, so the prosaic practical England of reality always lay within his reach in case of necessity.

Ladislás laughed uncomprehendingly. "Hide-bound British conceit! I might have known it; we poor foreigners aren't worth arguing with. When I was in England, a boy, that annoyed me sometimes; now I am older I see that God made the English so, otherwise they would have been too perfect. Come, let us press the horses a little, for I'm beginning to think of supper and bed."

CHAPTER XII.

ANYONE who has reached the evening of a day's riding to an uncertain destination will know the feelings with which the two young men scanned the country ahead. The grey clouds had lowered; a fine rain was falling; there was no sunset light flashing on windows or giving warmth and beauty to the hill-wall in front. Infinite sadness, croaking frogs in the full ditches, sodden fields, cheerless closed houses, and the tides of day ran down towards the chill depression of a wet spring night.

Ralph had a hatred of rainy twilight. When, somewhere unseen, a woman's voice rose in a melancholy, tuneless song, he reached a climax of discomfort. He could have cried for sheer misery. It made him remember the gloomiest moments of his life, —his first sight of the London streets at the same hour, and a beggar singing by the kerb; an awful winter Sabbath in a Scotch provincial town; a night he had been lost on the fells, and the grim passing of his father when the frost-fog lay so thick that at an open window one had gasped for breath. If Ladislás would only talk, laugh, and joke as usual! But Ladislás was peering silently ahead, forcing the chestnut to a harder trot, weighing in his mind the risk to be run if they claimed hospitality, and the doubtfulness of their reception at an inn. The reports had run that volunteers were joining Zucchi or the Venetian army from all Friule and the Veneto. On the other hand, when Zucchi had tried an attack on Nugent's outposts, the people of Visco had stood loyal. It was undesirable to fight for bed and food, but

the simple peasant might take money without questioning whether the plainly-dressed travellers he sheltered were for one side or the other. At Longarone, in the Piave valley, dwelt a German innkeeper to whom a sergeant had given him a letter ; but it was another day's ride to Longarone, and, on the whole, he thought a farm the better venture than an inn. There would be less folk than in a village, and fewer questions asked.

The faint lights of Spilimbergo cheered Ralph, but brought a choking sensation into his throat that forbade speech. How many times had he splashed along a darkening road staring at the twinkles from the windows of home and thinking over the events of a day's hunting !

"Here's a field-path that should lead to a house," said Ladislas. "Let's try to get put up, and mind the dogs, whatever you do."

"But there's a village——"

"Dirty, unhealthy places, villages. If it wasn't so wet we'd try to find a stack."

"But I must get the mare under cover and give her a feed."

"My dear boy, we're campaigning, not on a riding-tour. We can't have first-class hotels and stables on this journey ; but we'll try a house, though it's foolish. Have your pistol ready in case of trouble."

Here was matter to drive away longings for home, a warm supper and accustomed bed. The danger was so hidden that he had forgotten it again,—the delightful hint of danger and adventure. No wonder Ladislas had been silent and pre-occupied. The boy felt his revolver-butt and loosened the thong of his hunting-whip, ready to cope with revolutionaries or savage dogs at a moment's notice.

As they rode along the cart-track a certain faint, familiar smell struck the senses, something of a flowery nature with all spring and England in it. Apple-blossom ! The trees they could hardly see were apples, of course, and Ralph's thoughts went back to a red-brick walled garden and a little green garth beyond, where two or three ewes with sickly lambs used to have pink and white petals showered on them from gnarled old brown trees.

"*Holà !*" shouted Ladislas, stopping before an archway.

"Who goes there ?" answered a man's voice, and a chorus of barking echoed the question.

"Travellers seeking a night's lodging."

By the light of a flickering naked lamp the man seemed to be a short, thick-set, surly peasant. "What business are you on?" he asked in a queer dialect, half Venetian, half of the hills.

"Wise men ask no questions these days. We can pay." Ladislas clinked coin as he spoke.

"Where are you from?" persisted the man, still standing in the archway and swinging his lamp so that it lit up a scrap of the chestnut's wet quarter, then dazzled Ralph in the eyes, and anon sent a wandering ray into the dim mist at their backs.

"From the South," said Ladislas with significance.

"We do not smoke," put in Ralph, remembering some of the catch-words Hinton had told him showed "true men."

There was a pattering of wooden shoes on stone; the light glinted for a moment on a small red head, and a breathless sigh of excitement came from its owner pushing close to her father's arm.

"Well, Austrians or friends, if you can pay—"

Ladislas jumped off and thrust a thaler into his hand. "That's the right way to look at it," said he; "now show us the stable."

The man muttered something and slouched inwards. They were about to follow him when a child's voice said imperiously, "Come with me."

"And you will show us where to put the poor tired beasts, signorina? Capital," laughed Ladislas.

"I will show. *Babbo* has gone to tell *mámma*, who will be angry. Ah, mind the dog; but see, he does not bite." Ralph had thoughtlessly put out his hand to the brindled mongrel sniffing at his legs. The girl had taken the light from her father and was leading them across uneven stones towards a closed door; to the right the gleam of a fire showed the living house. There was a pleasant smell of hay and cattle when the door was opened, and the lamp hung upon a nail within.

Both men set to unsaddling at once, and Countess stretched her nostrils in a long sigh of pleasure as the girths were loosened. Ralph turned as he slipped off the bridle and looked at the child; he saw a shock-head of red hair, a tiny white face above a slim body, and thin legs; she was watching him with intense interest. "Now a pail of hot water, *carina*, would be a grand thing," he said; "and, by your leave, I will take as much as I want of this straw." He smiled at her as he spoke, and a queer elfish grin

responded. These marvellous people called her *signorina* and *carina*. One was big enough to be a terrible giant, but this one smiled.

"Hot water," she repeated with a nod and vanished.

"Oh, Ladislas, let me tell them we are both English travellers ; then perhaps they will think us mad and harmless. The old man's a patriot of a doubtful sort, I judge."

"And the woman probably rabid,—they are far the worst. Listen !"

Sounds of shrill altercation or invective reached them. "Very good ; we'll try the magic of the English name if we can."

Ralph had rubbed his mare down and made her as comfortable as he could with some clean straw, when the child returned staggering with a shining copper of smoking water. "*Bravissima, mia bella !* Now what—ah, these will do," said he, as his eye fell on two or three earthenware basins heaped with odds and ends of tools in a corner.

"Oh, meal and water ? capital !" said Ladislas, and the child shrank away as the giant knelt over the basin, took his bag of meal from its place and mixed it. She liked better to watch the smiling one. He rinsed the basin first, made the queer *polenta* with much care, tried it with his finger, and smiled at her again as he carried it to the whinnying horse who certainly loved him. Nina was fond of animals, and was very like one in her silent ruminative way. She slipped up to Ralph's side as he watched Countess sucking joyfully. "The *mámma* is very angry and wished *babbo* to go up to the town that they may take and kill you for an Austrian."

"Oho ! But you wouldn't like me killed, would you, little one ?" She shook her head. "Ladislas, do you hear ?" he said in English.

"Yes, it will be as well to put a pistol to this gentleman's head at once, and argue sense into his wife's."

"She may have sent someone already. Is there only *babbo* to go ?" he asked.

"Of course. Stefano is in the mountains, fighting. Are you Tedesco ?"

"No ; I'm English. Does that convey anything to you, Biondina ?"

"If you are not Tedesco all is well. But *mámma* will not believe."

"I'll convince her," said Ladislás, making for the door. An angry woman, red-haired as Nina, a sullen, frightened man, and Ladislás using the arguments of the dominant race, formed the picture which greeted Ralph and little Nina when they reached the house-door.

"They will pay," reiterated the husband dully.

"It doesn't matter whether we pay or not. We share your supper, or ——" said Ladislás.

"Fool, not to have set the dogs on them and fired the gun at once!" snarled the red-haired woman; and finding herself close to her husband she swung up her clenched hand as if automatically, fetching him a buffet on the side of his grizzled head.

"Oh, come now, we are English, and ask for nothing but a few hours' hospitality," put in Ralph, feeling the child's hand squeezing his convulsively.

"What do I see? Another cursed Tedesco? Oh, God that sendest hail and fever and Germans to torture poor folk, forgive me that I cannot strike these dead on my hearth!"

The woman was verging on hysterics, but her husband never lost his phlegmatic surliness. Only Ralph felt the child's hand trembling, and stepped forward to stay Ladislás's burst of anger. "Come, come, enough, we do you no harm." He put both hands on her shoulders which were twitching with passion, and for sheer surprise she fell silent. "Now you will be quiet, for you are frightening someone. Come to your mother, littlest."

Nina crept forward. Her mother's passions were horribly familiar and shook her nervous system to its depths, but she must obey this stranger. She was seized in a frantic embrace, sobbed over, wailed about, while Ralph turned away and said in English, "Supper, while the lull lasts."

"Friends, we must help ourselves as you are so unfriendly. Old man, remember my pistol is here, and you do not leave this room. We shall stay until before dawn; then you may do what the devil you like." Ladislás made the pronouncement very clearly, drew up a stool, and bent forward to examine the pot on the fire.

"Ah, let me get the bowls. Mámma, let me go!" cried Nina.

"Go, child," said her mother, her frenzy over and a gloomy reaction upon her.

It was a strange meal. The old man ate, but could not be

dragged into talk ; the woman sat on a bench in the shadows, refusing Ralph's offers of food, apparently half comatose. Only little Nina supped up her *polenta* and milk with relish and keenly enjoyed this interlude in her dull life. She answered Ralph's questions eagerly though shyly, and, when the bowls were empty, accepted the offer of a seat on his knee. Ladislas watched them a little enviously. He had often seen Ralph at a loss in a drawing-room ; even with a crowd of young men the English boy was apt to be shy and tongue-tied. It had been a sufficiently tiresome day, they had hard work in front of them, yet the younger campaigner was apparently the fresher. To pet a child till she fell asleep in one's arms was a thing Ladislas might have laughed at elsewhere. He had no fancy for babies, knowing them only as awkward little creatures which young girls sometimes gushed over and sensible men and women ignored.

"Get an hour's sleep," whispered Ralph ; "and put that other log on, for I can't move."

The dark earthen-floored kitchen was very still. Now and again the woman moaned, in her sleep perhaps, and the man, who was huddled into a corner of the fire-settle, snored. Ralph occupied the other end of the settle, Ladislas a queer-shaped chair with sloping high back and arms. The fireplace, as usual in the Veneto, was a true hearth-altar with space all round it and so wide a chimney that, by one leaning over the embers and looking up, a star in the broken clouds could be seen.

So the night passed in silence,—and wood-smoke.

Ladislas sighed and woke, muttered, "Your turn," and stirred the embers with his boot.

Ralph and the sleeping child had fitted themselves into the most comfortable positions possible, and the boy dozed for centuries, then really lost consciousness for a moment and woke with a start to find Ladislas stretching himself with a clink of spurs. "Cold *polenta* ? No, none left. Gnaw a bit of bread then," he said, breaking the hard black loaf in two.

"Good-bye, Ninetta," whispered Ralph, laying the little thing on the settle. She stirred, but did not wake, apparently not noticing the hardness of the bed. As they went to the door the woman cursed them in a low voice, but the old man never moved.

"Were they awake ?" asked Ralph, shivering in the paling starlight of the yard outside.

"He was, by his breathing, but he hasn't the pluck to shoot, or slip off for help. When the woman rouses fully, she'll have us chased. Quick now!"

In the dark stable the horses were saddled and bridled more by feel than the light of an evil-smelling sulphur match or two. The oxen clanked their chains, and the dogs sniffed round, friendly and curious. The old stiff bolts of the yard-door took some wrenching, but the light was still dim grey when they gained the field-path, and struck across country briskly towards the mountains.

"Oh for a guide," grunted Ladislas.

"North-west I made the direction by the map," said Ralph; "we can't go wrong till we're fairly in the hills. Come up, mare! Look out, it's a widish ditch."

They were making the best haste possible to gain a start, paying no attention to crops, but choosing the straightest possible way over the river-meadows towards the hills. A slippery bank brought Countess on to her nose, floundering in a bad recovery. Ralph half rolled, half jumped off; the mare stood snorting and trembling, holding up one of her fore-legs. He led her for a stride or two and she limped, but went more soundly as he got her on to a cart-track where the going was firmer. There was no mark of injury; it might be only a momentary strain.

"That's the road we want," said Ladislas, pointing upwards; "once on it we can't well miss the hill-track over to Claut. Then we shall have done with these messy streams and cross-country work, which is like very bad English hunting, heh? You were not hurt just now?"

"No, and I don't think the mare is. I was afraid she'd overreached at first, but she's going better now."

They took the upward way, a stony mule-track above a stream that speedily became a torrent as the gorge grew steeper. Once, pausing by a little church perched on a shelf of the hill-side, they took a long look back over the watered land below. A dark line on a road was made out to be men marching, but they could not say whether regulars or volunteers. The fortress of Osopo was not so far away, and movements for its defence or attack were bound to be on foot. That they were not hotly pursued was as evident as the reason; no one of importance had time to think of two riders, spies on one side or the other, gone indefinitely to the north. Nugent was at Udine, Culoz at Tarvis,

the Free Corps had their hands full, and, as it was impracticable to attack the great force, they were gathering every man available to defend the defile of Pontebba against Culoz's inevitable descent.

So Ladislav felt his wallet of precious papers, tossed a *kreutzer* to the beggar on the church steps, and turned the chestnut's head up and westward. It was not a good road for horses, though it might have pleased a goat. The men were soon leading, scrambling up rocks, sliding down *moraines*, picking their steps along the slippery edges of precipitous cliffs, every moment a danger and every yard hard work. Countess was less clumsy than the chestnut, though now and then she hesitated, stumbled, and seemed afraid to trust herself. The conviction grew on Ralph that she was going lame, but there was no possibility of stopping. It was weary work. Ladislav, in front, would reach the top of a boulder, pull the chestnut up with cries, whipcord, and a rattle of stones, to his side; then by the time Ralph had done likewise, there would be further disintegration of the mountain-side and the chestnut would be apparently sliding to destruction on his haunches. As the day advanced, their halts became more frequent, and the pace slower. Ladislav pored over his map, which was a private survey of the district more full and accurate than anything official, and given to him by the old General himself. "Claut should be round the next turn, and then we have only a little way and a decent road to Longarone," he said half a dozen times, and still the great peaks mocked them with their unchanging outlines, and the same patches of snow lay around and ahead like white tablecloths spread for some titanic feast. Ralph was much less tired than the big Austrian, but his heart was sore for Countess limping behind, telling him continually with reproachful eyes that she could not go another step, and yet making gallant efforts to come on.

Nothing in the world could have been so welcome as the sight of that little cluster of grey stone-roofed houses with brown wooden balconies and a tiny church-tower rising over all in the valley below them. They stumbled across a stream by a rickety wooden bridge and found themselves the amazement of a few girls and one or two old village patriarchs.

"To Longarone? Straight on. Would the gracious strangers take a drink of milk?" The housewife of Cadore was no churl to ask questions. Enemy or friend, the traveller must first be entertained. They gulped down the good milk eagerly, with thanks and a *kreutzer* to a flaxen-haired child who clung to his

mother's red apron ; but they told no news, and pressed on to make Longarone while the light remained and the mare could travel.

Down in those dim glens with awful treacherous cliffs overhanging, the incessant roar of torrents, and every cranny and sunless slope still white with snow, it was sombre enough. The last bit of the way was up a short hill and down a steep descent to gain the level of the Piave, here a widish valley with the town of Longarone on its banks.

How that last mile was done Ralph never knew. At every stride the mare winced and slipped ; the spring sun that had cheered them through the long day had sunk into purple twilight ; a chilly wind whistled from the snowy peaks, and only the thought of the inn ahead carried them down in safety.

Another long, crazy wooden bridge led them to a steep little road between walls and past a saw-mill to the main street. The sign of the Aquila Nera creaked in the wind. Through the big doorway into a yard where people ran to and fro busy before the evening meal went Ladislav with a shout that brought instant attention. "Oh Hermann !" A stout red-faced man panted up. He was not pleased to see them : the times were bad and folk most ill-affected ; but he would do what he could. An hour later Countess had her nose into her manger, and her off fore-leg rubbed and bandaged, while her master could hardly keep his eyes open over a large plateful of stewed veal and a glass of good German beer.

CHAPTER XIII

A GLANCE at his mare next morning showed Ralph plainly enough how things went with her. "Countess can't move to-day, Ladislav ; she's as lame as a tree. Can I leave her here and get another ? I hate to do it."

"But we must press on ; every hour's of importance. Hermann, what horses have you, or what decent ones can you get ?"

"The two the Herr Graf sees. They are not fit for anything but the cart, or diligence work in summer now and then. Who else should have horses here ? They are all poor folk. A pony or two to pull the sledges over the snow, but Cadore is no place for horses."

"Ladislás, what shall I do? She may be fit to move to-morrow; I can't find much wrong; only this puffy place—feel—up there it doesn't hurt her. I believe it's more that she's done up, and wants a day's rest."

Ladislás was looking intensely troubled. "You know my orders," he said.

"To report at Cortina d'Ampezzo as soon as possible; then to join Welden wherever he may be and give him the despatches. Yes; you must go straight on, and I will follow as soon as I can. I may catch you at Cortina, or hear there where I can rejoin you quickly."

"I'm sorry. I would say, come on foot, but after Valle I believe it's a good riding road, and I must lose no time."

"Of course. I'll be all right; I'll catch you up; you needn't fuss as if I should get lost when you let me stray from your leading-rein." Ralph laughed, but he was also annoyed. It was no part of their plan to separate, and on such a journey it is not always easy to meet again. There was nothing to be done, however, but to help to fill the saddle-bag with food, drag the protesting chestnut out of the stable, and watch Ladislás ride off down the road, giving him a wave of the hand as he reached the turn and the narrowing valley of the Piave took him to itself.

"Herr Englishman, may I beg that you will stay indoors, or, at any rate, not show yourself in the town while you are here?" asked fat Hermann anxiously in German. "The people so badly affected are," he continued. "They already do not love me because I speak their tongue as a German (and also on account of some little dealings with the wood), therefore, they might be rude to a stranger who was my guest."

"Oh, all right," said Ralph. He did not really care what happened; Ladislás gone, twenty-four hours' waiting had to be got through in some way, and in what way seemed at first not to matter.

The morning was spent well enough in doctoring the mare. Then came lunch,—veal and beer, beyond which Hermann's idea of food did not soar—but after lunch what was to be done? How on earth should he get through the fresh windy April afternoon if he might not go abroad and, at least, explore a bit of the river? Caution, be hanged! His host's fat back was turned to inspect the way the equally fat Frau and her wild-haired assistant were polishing a huge shining copper wine-

cooler, whose fine sixteenth-century chasing would have made a collector's heart to leap.

The door into the yard was open. A wooden gate led into a scrap of garden, from which a low wall allowed him to drop on to a path some fifty feet above and away from the white-foaming Piave. Fish, he wondered, or otters, and down he scrambled through bushes, logs, and shale to get a nearer view of the water. It was a very pretty vista up or down stream. Below, the hills met as the river curved; above, they did the same but at a greater distance, more snow-clad, and with a quaint white church and grey village in front. The water was a real snow torrent, too rapid for any sign of fish to appear. "There may be pools higher up," he thought, and turned to search along the stony bank for any trace of otters or birds.

Above the inn and road the hillside was terraced for the growing of a little Indian corn and a few poor vines. Along this terrace ran a path turning presently, by gorges and woods, to small grass clearings and villages far up in the mountains. Along it, above the heads of the houses of Longarone, strode a thin active figure, in a queer, short, fur-collared coat, whistling a polka. His roving eyes lighted on the boy by the river and he stopped; none but a gipsy could have recognised a figure at that distance. "My Englishman, ah," he said. "The Count will be here also. Why are they delayed? Shall I go ask Hermann? After all, it does not matter; I shall see him again, God willing. He may want help further up. No, to-day to Cibiana, to-morrow round by Valle and Pieve and Luigia, perhaps." Lal walked a little further and gave the mallard's call very shrilly. Ralph's head went up; the gipsy chuckled. "Bird and beast; he'll always know more about them than men. Only the gipsy knows both," he said to himself with ineffable satisfaction.

Ralph searched the sky for birds, but saw nothing. A raft of logs, steered by two active men with iron-shod poles, roused his interest; punting, or rather steering, down the roaring stream looked a fascinating amusement. This was not bound for the wood-sheds of Hermann, but disappeared under the bridge down the reaches, a black speck on the white water hurrying to Italy. The chill of the abrupt spring sunset turned him back to the inn. A group of girls stared at him: a tinkling cow following them put down her horns at the stranger; but there were not many folk about, and Hermann's reproaches were unnecessarily warm.

Countess was eating her supper with calm appreciation. She no longer winced, and the swollen leg had subsided and cooled. He stayed, sitting on the manger, talking to her in the dusk. She was so much more interesting than Hermann and his fat Frau. He felt a little lonely without Ladislas, but to-morrow, very carefully so that no legs might be hurt, the road should be taken again. A good road after Valle, Hermann said, only there seemed to be a confusing number of dales and tracks; and the people were strongly Italian,—small blame to them! One Calvi was organising what he called mountain cavalry, bands of men at certain points to roll rocks down on troops passing below. There was a place before Cortina was reached, called La Chiusa, because the narrow road could be blocked entirely; probably it was blocked, and Hermann advised a complicated detour to avoid the point. There was no chance of a guide: "They would shoot you if they thought you were going to join the Austrians." Ah well, with a wise little mare, a fells-man ought to be able to get on among the mountains.

"Herr Englishman, the supper is here, and it would be well that you should go to bed before my guests see you or ask questions." He hated the cautious Hermann, and was sick of veal and beer.

Next morning, after a wrangle over the bill in the dim dawn, he and Countess set out. At first the road was flat, blasted in places out of the overhanging rock, not much improved since Napoleon's making, but good enough for the time and place. Sometimes the Piave was but a few feet below, and sometimes one had to lead carefully round a recent landslip. The little villages were very clean and poor, and their few inhabitants seemed friendly enough.

After some miles of good travelling Perarolo came in sight, a straggling line of new-built houses, a dam and a bridge across the river, and some wood-yards full of logs. Here Ralph's instructions were to turn from the road and strike through the woods above the Boîte, a way which would be shorter, and avoid Pieve and Tai where Calvi and his men had their head-quarters. It was a gloomy little place, still bearing the marks of an awful catastrophe known as *La Rovina di '23*, when the Boîte, dammed by a landslip, burst through in a great wall of water sweeping all Perarolo before it.

"The road to Valle, the old road?" The child he asked spoke curiously and seemed puzzled by his Italian, but she

pointed out the way, a track mounting high above the Boîte ; of her further directions he gathered only the words Monte Zucco, as applying to the cliffs above. He thought it better to dismount now and lead the mare through the path. It was not half so bad as it had been yesterday. There was time to enjoy the glory of the morning and the wonder of spring in those deep woods with distant snows seen through the firs here and there. Evidently the old road had once been of importance, and still was much used. The landslips had flung earth and stones over it, but in many places there were remains of paving like those of Roman ways at home. Presently an opening towards the Boîte gorge showed the other side of the stream. It was indescribable, grim, terrific. The huge wood-crowned height was like a man's face laid open from forehead to chin, a red gash, a *rovina* indeed. The whole hill-side had broken away in one awful night of heavy rain after frost, and now the red earth lay naked, scored by runnels, a monument of desolation. These were no eternal crags, granite or hard grey limestone, counting their unchanging years by thousands, but treacherous, beautiful death-traps always shifting, falling, moving. A hill-man from the North-country was fascinated with the splendour and horror. Meanwhile he passed under a wall of rock, and gained a little height on which he paused to look about him. Countess considered the young grass just free from snow pleasant to the taste, and her master munched bread and veal as he scanned the scenery.

In front, the trees hid another gorge, some small stream joining the Boîte at right angles. Beyond lay a village. The church, with its pepper-pot tower, was planted on the edge of a precipice, the grey-roofed houses straggled among fields and were backed by a mountain, wooded save for its bare top on which a tiny chapel was perched among the snows. Over one shoulder of it towered a dim snow-giant ; beyond the wooded Boîte valley were more mountains, peaks and tables and sugar-loaves, blazing white against the blue sky.

His next business was to get through Valle without any troublesome questions. It was mid-day when he scrambled up the stony lane past the quaint wooden three-cornered Calvary, and under the balconies of the narrow street. "Come to *polenta*," called the mothers at a dozen doors, and scores of fat, fair children left their games or dropped their little baskets at the welcome summons. Only a few men loitered by the old Venetian fountain in the piazza ; they all stared, but no one said

more than "Good-day," and the main road was safely gained. Half a mile further came the place of which Hermann had spoken, where it was better to cross the Boîte to avoid La Chiusa. A winding way led him down to a splendid stone bridge of a single span, old as the days when Venetian iron-work was made at Cibiana, older maybe, and still wonderful in that country of perishable wooden structures. But, once across, the road dwindled to a track,—perhaps an old landslip had destroyed it—which twisted and forked in a fashion infinitely confusing to a stranger without guide or map. The thick woods hid all landmarks; he dared not leave the path, which became more difficult and steep at each stride. Press on, however, they must, and though it was plain that they had taken a wrong turn, to go back would only lead to worse confusion.

A sudden strange noise broke the silence, as they cautiously scrambled in the cold shadow of a beetling cliff. It was no bird-call, but more metallic than a human voice had any business to be. The long cackling laugh made Ralph stand trembling like Countess for a moment. "A very good place to meet the Devil, too," he said steadily aloud. "Come up, mare."

The path might have been made by chamois on their way to drink at the Boîte in summer. It was not pleasant to look down at the tree-tops below one's feet, or up at the sheer rock-wall; it was extremely difficult to go on, perfectly impossible to turn back. Alone, he could have hurried; with the mare tripping and snorting behind, it was slow work. All sorts of silly thoughts crossed his mind. Old jokes Ladislas had made—Heavens, what wouldn't he give to have him here!—the recollection that it was the Emperor's birthday and perhaps he had no throne to sit on; a score of foolish ideas clung to fiercely so that he might forget that most unpleasant sound, laugh, call, whatever it was. Then came, suddenly, a crash above, and for a time Ralph knew no more about the affairs of this world.

Poor little Countess lay with a broken back half under the great boulder that had knocked her fifty feet down, and her master, caught in his fall by a thicket of barberry, was stunned by a smaller bolt from the Cavalry of the Mountains.

Far above that evil laugh rang out again, but no one came to see the mischief done.

(To be continued.)

IS THE LEGAL OATH EFFECTIVE ?

A new departure was effected at the sitting of the Westminster County-Court yesterday in the provision of "sanitary" Testaments, upon which witnesses are sworn. The covers of the books are made of celluloid, which can be swiftly and easily cleaned after use.—*Vide Daily Press.*

Nor long ago a solicitor who was called to give evidence in a Metropolitan Court of Justice went into the witness-box, and putting his hand into his pocket produced a Testament, on which he asked to be allowed to take the oath. The horror-struck official informed him that his request could not be entertained, and that he must be sworn on the Testament provided by the court. About the same time a well-known divine attended an inquest to give evidence, and when asked to kiss the Book he deliberately, in the sight of all, kissed his thumb. Observing this, the alert coroner insisted that he should kiss the Book. The witness opened the Book haphazard, gingerly saluted one of the printed pages, and then proceeded to give his evidence.

These two incidents illustrate in concrete form the common protest against a legalised practice which Judge Snagge has described as "insanitary, repulsive, and horrible to contemplate," and which medical men almost universally condemn. The paragraph quoted at the head of this article discloses one effect of that protest. Hygienic Testaments are appearing in courts everywhere. Obviously they are preferable to the ancient books which in some places generations of witnesses have been sworn upon. THE LANCET records an instance of a Testament dated 1796 being used in one particular court. At High Wycombe the same Testament has been in use for over a century, and may still be doing duty if it has not been consigned to some museum of antiquities or to the dust-heap. In a

certain Chancery Court there was in use until recently a Testament that had belonged to the holder of the long defunct office of Vice-Chancellor. The introduction of sanitary Bibles clearly justifies the public protest against kissing the Book, and marks official recognition of a certain danger. But although the danger is admitted, it is permitted to continue unchecked in a vast majority of courts.

That no one is compelled to kiss the Book must be fully granted. The Oaths Act, 1888, prescribes that any witness may, if he chooses, take the oath in the Scottish manner, which substitutes for the kiss the raising of the right hand, the left meanwhile resting on the Book. A notice to that effect is permanently affixed to the doors of the Divorce Court in the Royal Courts of Justice. Nowadays a witness making choice of this form runs no risk of such a check as Erskine once inflicted. When a witness requested to be allowed to swear in the Scottish fashion, Erskine asked him, "What is your reason for making that request?" "My Lord," was the reply, "the angel standing on the sea lifted up his right hand." "Well," was his Lordship's rejoinder, "this does not apply in your case. In the first place you are no angel; in the second place you cannot tell how the angel would have acted had he been on dry land as you are." No modern judge would think of indulging in such banter. Not only is there official recognition, therefore, of physical danger in kissing the Book, but also of complete lack of necessity for the practice. Yet not one person in ten knows of the alternative open to him. Witnesses who abhor the practice are allowed to conform to it in ignorance that any other course lies open to them. By subterfuge they endeavour in multitudes of instances to evade the repulsive requirement, and are often abruptly checked without any explanation. Indeed the Oaths Act might well be a dead letter. If kissing the Book is dangerous and unnecessary, is there any substantial hindrance to its total abolition?

Vainly one seeks substantial reason for the custom. Common sense is entirely opposed to it. Sentiment and tradition alone support it. True, the kiss is a symbol of supreme adoration and worship. The Greeks saluted the hands of their great men with a kiss, and the custom is not unknown to-day in many countries. The highest felicity of the devout Roman Catholic is to press with his lips the cross on the slipper of his Holiness

the Pope. The soul of the swain goes out in a kiss the world through. But those are all matters of inclination or choice. They have not the authority of Divine injunction, but spring from individual decision. Coke, in speaking of the administration of the oath, has no word to say of the kiss. "It is called a corporal oath because the witness touched with his hand some part of the Holy Scripture." That is all. When he swore that he would take nothing from the Kingdom of Sodom, Abraham did not press his lips to anything, but "lifted up his hand." No minister of the Gospel outside the Roman Catholic Church deems it a Divine ordinance cast upon him to salute the Book whose truths and commands he is sworn to obey and impart. Why should the law demand that which the Church, with its exact obedience to scriptural direction, thinks unnecessary? Because the law does many inexplicable things. No one questions the desirability of some kind of formulary. It is, perhaps, right and proper that the witness should hold the Testament in his ungloved right hand. Minute regard for strict observance to harmless procedure helps to impress upon the oath-taker the serious and binding nature of the undertaking he is giving. But kissing the Book many regard as a custom pagan enough to be ranked with the waving of green branches and offering of libations of wine, and, until it is done away with, the practice will continue of people of refinement and nice taste making pretence only of performing an objectionable act and so directly evading what the law ordains.

The growing antipathy to kissing the Book has had a curious psychological result. Before objection was so pronounced, a court official assured me that by constant observation he was able with approximate accuracy to tell what kind of evidence a witness would give—true or false—by his manner of taking the oath. A smart, resounding smack, for instance, which seemed almost to rebound from the cover of the book, he did not necessarily interpret as indicating an intention to be veracious. It was just as likely to express an almost ferocious animosity towards an opponent, and a determination to adhere to a formulated story that might lack the elements of truth. There was naturalness in the act of swearing that revealed the mental state as unconscious movements do. But an awakened fear of contamination has imposed on the witness a painful consciousness in multitudes of cases, and no longer is his bearing a safe guide

to the frame of mind concealed. When everything has been said as to the manner of swearing, this point remains unassailed, that the validity of an oath depends upon the form of administration being regarded by the witness as binding upon his conscience. It has been held that, in whatever form the oath be taken, the witness by accepting that form regards it as binding. A case is mentioned where a man, who afterwards turned out to be a Jew, had been sworn on the New Testament, and it was held that, as he had assented to the form administered, the oath was binding upon him. No one has yet declared that the mere placing of the left hand on the Book, with the uplifting of the right, comes short of the act of kissing the Book in solemnity or dignity. It is open to no hygienic objection, and conforms to the idea of devoutness. The form should at least be cleanly, and that is exactly where the English form is deficient. Its very antiquity, on which so much stress is laid, is its condemnation.

There is the beginning and ending of all legitimate complaint which may be made of the English legal oath. Its phraseology is unassailable. "The evidence you shall give on the matters in question shall be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help you God," is a promise and an invocation of Divine aid in fulfilling that promise which could hardly be lengthened or curtailed with advantage. To such words Anglicans, Dissenters, and Roman Catholics can subscribe with an easy conscience, for they involve no doctrinal ideas that are not common to all. Some people, indeed, imagine that they fall short of the necessities of the case, and require amplification, to wit, people of the kidney of the Wolverhampton man who some time ago was charged with stealing clothes. With the rare impudence of a confirmed blasphemer he supplemented the usual oath thus: "I hope the Lord will make my two eyes roll into my hat if I am not telling the truth." Such horrible invocations defeat their own ends; they would not carry conviction of innocence to a jury of watery-eyed lambkins. And yet, simple and comprehensive as the orthodox oath is, many people would like to see it administered in certain places with a little more intelligence. "Th' evidence y' sh'll giv' sh'll be th' truth th' 'ole truth, nothing but th' truth, s' 'elp y' God," is the nearest approach to analysis that is frequently possible. A novice-witness so addressed is surely made acquainted but ill with the serious nature of the undertaking he is giving, and may well be

forgiven if he ask, as a witness once did when the official's cabalistic recital had ceased, "What chapter have I to read?"

In its brevity the English form of words differs very minutely from the Scottish, French, Spanish, and Italian forms. Many nations require an attenuated speech with dramatic accompaniments. In Norway, for instance, a witness invites a perfect hurricane of evils to overwhelm him if he departs from the truth:—

If I swear falsely [he prays] may all I have and own be cursed; cursed be my land, field and meadow, so that I may never enjoy any fruit or yield from them; cursed be my cattle, my beasts, my sheep, so that after this day they may never thrive or benefit me; yea, cursed may I be and everything that I possess.

After such a comprehensive invocation of terrors, very little more would be thought necessary in the most exacting community. But the Burmese witness goes a great deal further. Should he be found lacking in veracity, he invites an overwhelming cataclysm of horrors to fall, not only upon himself, but upon all his relatives.

Let us be subject to all the calamities that are within the body and all that are without the body. May we be seized with madness, dumbness, deafness, leprosy, and hydrophobia. May we be struck with thunderbolts and lightning and come to sudden death.

If perjurers are as numerous in Burma as many believe them to be in this country, and if the utmost penalty is required of them, Sodom and Gomorrah could not have been more undesirable domiciles. When he breaks a saucer, or blows out a candle, or lops off the head of a cock, in symbolic substitution of a spoken oath, the Chinaman shows himself merciful by comparison. But the Chinaman is adaptable in many respects, and has been known to be very cosmopolitan in the matter of oaths when so disposed. At Lancaster once a Celestial by his willingness to comply with the English custom occasioned an amusing, if not very dignified, incident. Though ready to be sworn he wholly failed to understand the English form of oath.

"Have you been baptised?" asked the judge.

"Oh, yes, allee towns I come to I baptised," was the reply.

That presented to the judge a difficulty which he felt himself unable to decide without assistance. So he sent his clerk to

consult a brother judge who was sitting in another court as to what should be done.

"Swear the devil according to the laws of his own country," was the vigorous advice alleged.

"But, my Lord," protested the clerk, "he is a Christian."

"Christian be damn'd," was the retort, "he is no more a Christian than I am."

But ignorance of the meaning of the English oath is not peculiar to the foreigner. There are some at home who must plead guilty to the same failing, and it is not to the credit of English parents that frequently they are to be found amongst the young, whose enlightenment on such matters should be a first consideration. For instance, a boy of ten was once asked:—

"Do you know the nature of an oath?"

"No, sir, I never heard of 'im."

"What, don't you know what an oath is?"

"Oh, I suppose it is something like what you give horses to eat."

"Well, you know the difference between a lie and the truth, don't you?"

"No, sir, I don't."

Sir William Maul, a judge of the old Court of Common Pleas, once had before him a little girl who showed much brighter intelligence.

"Do you know what an oath is, my child?" asked his Lordship, who was reputed for his dry humour.

"Yes, sir, I am obliged to tell the truth."

"And if you do always tell the truth where will you go when you die?"

"Up to heaven, sir."

"And what will become of you if you tell lies?"

"I shall go down to the naughty place, sir."

"Are you quite sure of that?"

"Yes, sir, quite sure."

"Let her be sworn," said Sir William. "It is quite clear she knows a great deal more than I do."

The moral value of the oath does not rest entirely on the solemnity and binding character of the words used. It has the material aid of the Testament on which the pledge is given. Some people regard this as more or less a sentimental accessory. A simple illustration will suffice to show that the element of

sentiment does really exist. It is related of Sir Stafford Northcote, afterwards Lord Iddesleigh, that when he presented himself at Exeter to be sworn a magistrate for the County of Devon, he was handed a well-worn book tied round with red tape. Suspicious of its appearance he cut the tape, and discovered that for thirty years the magistrates had been sworn on a ready reckoner, believing it to be a Testament. It would be libel on the magisterial bench to say that the cause of justice would have suffered had the truth been known ; none the less, it is probable that foreknowledge of such substitution would in a larger sphere have invited wilful perjury in very many cases.

The fact that every nation, ancient and modern, has seen the fitness of including some kind of oath-taking in its legal procedure stamps the custom as necessary. But the last fifty years cover a period in socialistic and reforming ideas, and those people are not now insignificant in number who deny the utility of the oath and would dispense with it altogether. Their method of argument has the merit of pointedness but is too general to be convincing. Why have an oath at all ? they ask. Honest people who are accustomed to tell the truth will always tell the truth, oath or no oath. Therefore, for them no oath is necessary. Perjurers, intent on committing perjury, will fulfil their intentions, though they take a hundred oaths. Therefore, upon them an oath is thrown away. That is quite accurate so far as it goes. Every court official will bear it out with ample illustration. But truth-tellers on principle and perjurers by practice do not cover the whole range of humanity. They form extremes between which comes a third class not quite so summarily disposed of. These follow wholly neither Washington nor Ananias. They have something of the tendency of the former with a large share of the cowardice of the latter. They would tell the truth if there was nothing to lose, but they would not shrink from a lie if there was something to gain, and there were no ill consequences to follow. To such people the oath comes as a wholesome stimulant. In very solemn fashion, and at the crucial moment of temptation, it opens their eyes to the prospect of punishment. The formality of oath-taking often impels the timid nature to unintentional veracity, and is a check on the deliberate falsifier. This, no doubt, is not an ideal eminence from which to estimate the value of a custom. Morality so forced is not the best kind of morality. But the result attained is the

result aimed at by the act of oath-taking, and in the sum of its effect it operates entirely in the public interest. It does not obliterate perjury, but it keeps it in restraint.

There is no known panacea for the moral sickness of falsifying facts but principle, and where principle is halting or entirely absent the sense of honesty may be awakened by the formulary of oath-taking, which comprehends a threat of punishment for lapse. To punish every broken oath would be impossible. That would involve gargantuan gaols and an army of judges. Legislators recognised this when they stamped perjury as criminal only when it has relation to a vital point in an action and influences the result. Reason and practice forbear to venture further. Of necessity, small lies have to be blinked at. And because they are lightly viewed they multiply. They cease to be stigmatised as lies and rank as unfounded assertions. Very often they are fostered and encouraged by a process known as "cooking" evidence, familiar to a certain class of legal gentlemen. Witnesses are unquestionably sometimes inveigled into swearing to things they cannot substantiate. They put in affidavit what is quickly dissipated in cross-examination. What a man has heard is testified to as an episode witnessed. For all this the oath affords little palliation, and is therefore robbed of much of its intrinsic value. The evil has not grown less obtrusive in recent times. Not long ago Mr. Justice Ridley regretfully declared that "perjury has become very common," and more recently Mr. Justice Grantham remarked at the Old Bailey that undoubtedly there was "an enormous amount of perjury in English Courts—it was of daily occurrence." It is just this dishonest evidence as distinguished from flagrant perjury, seemingly so trivial a matter, that hampers the administration of justice and seemingly can be practised with small risk of check. Where it begins and ends it would tax the keenest judge to discover. It misses by a hair's-breadth the act of legal perjury, and does as serious mischief. An escaped untruth leaves a poisoned trail behind. Some mind absorbs it—possibly a juror's. To endeavour to stamp it out entirely by arbitrary methods would be a vain project doomed to failure. Perjury of any description was at one time punishable by decapitation—a truly drastic method which only partially succeeded. Judge Edge has expressed himself very plainly on the subject. In a case before him perjury was palpably and unblushingly practised.

His Honour remarked that a few lines inserted in an Act of Parliament would do much to check such glaring exhibitions of dishonesty. "Recommendations had been made by judges," he went on, "to Parliament, but some people seemed to think it was better to let perjury go unpunished rather than risk the chance of acquittal by a jury. Perjury was one of the saddest features of English life to-day. In the Law Courts it was growing more and more common. People went into the witness-box and took the oath knowing at the time they were going to make a statement which was altogether the opposite of the truth. They did it knowing there was little chance of punishment, and they lied with an ingenuousness and deliberation which was enough to stagger one." But those few statutory lines which Judge Edge longs to see have not yet appeared. Until they are formulated, is not some partial remedy possible by a more intelligent administration of the oath, which would impress the witness with its sacred nature, and make it less mechanical? And to that end the "insanitary and repulsive" act of saluting with the lips an ancient and microbe-haunted binding may well be abolished.

FREDERICK PAYLER

THE WHITE MAN AND THE BRITISH EMPIRE

The assertion that we know a great deal which we never at all perfectly apprehend is, of course, a truism. We know, for instance, that the pressure which the atmosphere exerts upon our bodies amounts to a certain number of pounds avoirdupois to the square inch, but we live and move and have our being without in the least realising that we are constantly sustaining that enormous weight. Similarly, we who live snugly in Great Britain know, without any true appreciation of the fact, that the Empire is to be regarded as a coloured man's rather than as a white man's institution. It is white men who builded it ; it is white men who still, for the moment, rule it ; but white British subjects are to-day enormously out-numbered by their fellows of swarthier hues, and if the principle of government by majority—the principle upon which the whole theory of our political institutions rests—be sound, then it is not the white men within the Empire who have the right to direct its destinies. We accordingly find ourselves impaled upon the horns of a dilemma. Either government by majority is not sound as a theory of universal application, in which case the trend of all our administrative work throughout the Empire is in a wrong and mischievous direction, or else the white minority is a band of usurpers that at present wields a power which is the birthright of the coloured majority.

The bare fact of the preponderance of the coloured over the white inhabitants of the Empire is, of course, a fact well *known* to every one of us ; but I question whether more than a very small percentage of educated Englishmen *realise* with any approach to accuracy the extreme smallness of the white populations in even the greatest of our Colonies as compared with the millions of brown or black people living under British rule. How many, I wonder, take to heart the fact that, for instance, London and its

suburbs contain a million and a half more souls than are to be found in the whole of the Dominion of Canada ; that the inhabitants of Lancashire out-number those of all Australia by a round million ; that the populations of New Zealand and of Glasgow are practically equal ; or that the white men in all vast South Africa are about as numerous as are the white men in Surrey ? Yet these things are true, and Canada, Australia and New Zealand, at any rate, are wont to be regarded as in some sort the strongholds of the white race in Greater Britain. On the other hand, if we turn to the East, we find British India alone with a population of 300,000,000, which is seven times greater than that of the British Isles, while in Africa a single State like Bornu, which not one Englishman in twenty could point out unhesitatingly on the map, carries some 10,000,000 blacks and about a score of Europeans. In Ceylon, in Malaya, in Fiji, in Hongkong, in South Africa, in Central Africa, in West Africa, in the West Indies—in every one of these the white inhabitants are hopelessly out-numbered by the brown, yellow, black, or coloured populations. That, then, is the first and salient fact which it is necessary to appreciate, not only to *know*, but to apprehend and to realise. In the greatest white Empire that the world has ever seen the white folk form a puny and pitiful minority.

By white men of the present generation—in whose eyes the creation of a *sphere of influence* has become an event as common and almost as inevitable as a telegram from the German Emperor—the conviction that the white race is innately superior to all other branches of the human family is accepted as an axiom so patent as to stand in need of little demonstration. “Increase and multiply and *dominate* the earth !” is the paraphrase of the divine command as white men read it to-day, and our ability to obey the summons is something that few of us so much as stay to question. Discipline, self-control, energy, mechanical ingenuity, and the strength that is bred of calm, practical brains and of indomitable will are, we are persuaded, upon our side, and for the rest the prestige of the white man must assure us the victory. Wherefore, in the past, the impossible has happened—nay, is happening still—and white men accept it as a thing of course. Matters have always stood thus, we are tempted to think ; little bands of white men have always dominated the hordes of a lesser breed, almost literally, “from China to Peru” ; it is our high destiny to rule, as it is the less

glorious destiny of others to be ruled ; it has become in our eyes part of the fixed scheme of things, and as such we regard it with proud self-satisfaction, thanking God, with the Pharisees, that we are not as these Publicans.

Yet this firm belief in the in-born superiority of white men over the men of other races is in reality a growth of comparatively recent development. When Vasco da Gama fought his fierce way round the Cape of Good Hope and threw wide the gates of the East to the intrusions of the West, when Alfonso d'Albuquerque dominated the Indies, and when Magellan circum-navigated the globe, these white men were not fortified by that unshakable conviction in the destiny of their kind, and by that strong faith in its prestige, which to-day make it easy for a young Deputy Assistant Commissioner in British India to exercise unquestioned authority over the people of a wide country-side. To the early invaders of the East a man was a man, let his colour be what it might, and rank was rank, let who would claim it. To the adventurers from Spain and Portugal, in whose memories still lingered the tradition of Moorish invasion, the brown man might be, and frequently was, an object of detestation ; but contempt was the last feeling that he was likely to arouse. Also, in the sixteenth century, the civilisations of Europe and of Asia were far more nearly on a level than they are in our own time, when the introduction of innumerable mechanical contrivances into daily life have made the difference subsisting between them one of kind rather than of degree. Moreover, the humanitarianism of latter-day white men had not as yet been evolved, while the humanitarianism of the East was then very much as it is now, as it has always been ; the modern European's passionate love of justice was then but a nascent sentiment ; and the susceptibility to pity, that so markedly differentiates the Occidental of the twentieth century from the Oriental, found no place in the breast of the ordinary white adventurer three hundred years ago. Wherefore young Europe and the old East were far more nearly on an actual and moral equality than they have since become, and the white filibuster went forth into Asia, just a man into a world of men, drawing no inspiration or borrowed strength from his belief in the superiority of his race or from his trust in its prestige.

There is evidence, too, in plenty to show how completely

absent from the minds of the men of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was the feeling which we to-day call *colour-prejudice*. Many white men of our own time, who have learned to know and love the peoples of the East, are commonly held to be superior to this sentiment, and so they doubtless are in the ordinary acceptance of the term. Ask one of them, however, to squat humbly at the feet of an Oriental potentate, or, applying the crucial test, invite him to give his daughter in marriage to an Asiatic, and you will find that the prejudice, so called, is not dead, but sleeping. The white man's pride, which will permit him to kneel in homage to an English King, will not suffer him to pay a like courtesy to an Oriental monarch, while the bare notion of wedlock between a brown man and a daughter of his race awakes in him passions which, to adopt Robert Louis Stevenson's phrase, would "disgrace Hell." Yet Magellan's chronicler, Pigafetta, tells us that in Borneo the proud rovers of Spain prostrated themselves without protest in the presence of the Sultan of Brunei, and submitted humbly to a distillation of their speech through a succession of interpreters of ascending rank, lest words spoken by persons so mean as themselves should sully the royal ears. Shakespeare, too, and Shakespeare's audiences (which is more to the point) saw nothing shocking or revolting in Desdemona's love for the Moor of Venice, though he is represented as a man of jetty hue, while Portia, even stately, queenly Portia, suffered the tawny Prince of Arragon to try his luck with the caskets, and contented herself with little more than a shudder of natural, feminine disgust at the thought of his "complexion."

No, the conviction of the superiority of the white man over the remainder of mankind is a new growth, bred of experience, and the sentiment called colour-prejudice is newer still, since the latter was in the first instance the direct and logical outcome of the former article of faith. This sprang into being originally with the marvellous successes that attended the European adventurers in their invasions of the East and in the Spanish conquests of the kingdoms of South America. When paltry handfuls of white men fared so far and wrought so greatly some explanation was necessary to account for the seeming miracle; and since all races went down before them, much as the walls of Jericho fell to the trumpet-blast, it needed no inordinate self-complacency to discern that, where the few prevailed and the

unnumbered multitudes were vanquished, something in the nature of an innate superiority must have its abiding-place with the former.

But, in the beginning, even the men who were themselves sowing seeds destined thereafter to bear such fruits of conviction for their descendants, were by no means disposed to despise the brown man, *quâ* brown man; the proudest grandees of Spain wedded publicly with the daughters of the Mexican nobility and begot children who were honoured for their mixed parentage, while the Portuguese in Asia did not scruple to give their daughters in marriage to rich natives who had embraced the Christian faith. It is perhaps natural that this should have been the case since the first European filibusters came from Portugal or from Spain, the only countries of the West in which, for an extended period of their history, the native white populations had been forced to live side by side with a horde of brown invaders—folk who made themselves no less respected than hated, and with whom inter-marriage was by no means uncommon.

Colour-prejudice, as we know it to-day—and this feeling was, in the beginning, nothing more or less than an expression of a fierce pride of race—first began to manifest itself strongly when the traders and sea-rovers of Holland and England were wresting the empire of the East from the failing grip of “the Portugals,” and were harrying the Dons and their shipping on the Spanish Main. These Northerners found the superiority of the white over the other races a fact proven and established; the past records of *their* countries supplied no tradition of defeat at the hands of a brown enemy; even occasional inter-marriage with dark-skinned peoples had played no part in the evolution of their race; and, above all, the necessity of maintaining the prestige and the dignity of the tiny bands of white men who in Asia were surrounded by such vast alien multitudes, appealed to these new-comers after a fashion in which it had never presented itself to the Spaniards or the Portuguese. Accordingly, as the outcome alike of a fierce pride of race and of an imperative policy, devotion to the white man’s prestige became a cult, and though one law was made for the man and another for the woman, the white race arrogated to itself a position of aloofness and superiority, and the sentiment of colour-prejudice came

insensibly into existence as a barrier of defence reared against the assaults of all whose skins were not white.

Yet this feeling on the subject of colour is, and has always been, to a great extent local.

The toad beneath the harrow knows
Precisely where each tooth-point goes ;
The butterfly upon the road,
Preaches contentment to the toad.

Both the butterfly and the toad, the gentleman of England who lives at home at ease, and the white man whose life is spent in close contact with a vast coloured population, hold to this conviction of the innate superiority of the white race over all others ; but while the former is inclined to regard colour-prejudice, as he somewhat scornfully calls it, as a manifestation of mere racial arrogance, the latter has learned to look upon it as a vital necessity for racial self-preservation.

Englishmen who are accustomed to stray no farther afield than Brighton beach are to be esteemed happy, in that they are spared many of the pressing anxieties that beset their less fortunate brethren in the more remote corners of the Empire. When, for instance, some newspaper during the dog-days starts a discussion in its columns on the subject of the Yellow Peril, the question is felt by most of us to be one of purely academic interest, and the debate upon the alleged danger leaves the British land-owner, the British shop-keeper, and still more the British workman, quite cold and unmoved. The problem is felt to be too remote, too far removed from the lives of Englishmen, to matter very much : the provision of, let us say, an adequate water-supply for London is thought to be of more immediate, and therefore more vital importance. It requires a stronger imagination than is possessed by most Englishmen to grasp the fact that, though the danger of Mongolian invasion does not affect Englishmen in England, such an invasion, conducted on lines of peace, not of war, is a standing menace to the sons of Englishmen in Australia and in the western States of America. Thus when stay-at-home Englishmen deprecate the policy of exclusion applied to free Chinese immigrants—viewing it from the point of vantage of a people inured to the free admittance of undesirable aliens into their own over-crowded land—they are apt to forget that an influx of strangers of what white men call an inferior race is a wholly

different matter from the introduction of the poverty-stricken and degenerate of our own kind. In other words, colour-prejudice and the sound reasons that lie at the back of that sentiment are persistently ignored.

The fantastic pictures which, from time to time, have been drawn for us of Europe overwhelmed by Asiatic hordes, invincible through sheer force of numbers, need not break our sleep, at any rate for the present: but the peaceful invasion of our labour-markets by men against whom white labour cannot compete with any prospect of success, is a calamity that belongs, not to some remote future, but to the living to-day. More than this, there is every probability that the war in the Far East, which at last has dragged its weary length to a final conclusion, will be found to be only the prelude to another and a greater war—a war this time, not of armaments, but of trade. The Japanese have proved themselves to be proficient in the utilisation of all the mechanical inventions which European ingenuity has devised and which have made European civilisation what it is. They have adapted them with marvellous success to the purposes of warfare; there is every reason to believe that they will adapt them with a success no less triumphant to the purposes of manufacture and of commerce. Yet, through all, the character of the people has not changed, and it is from the frugality of the East that Europe has most to fear. The white man, we have become accustomed to claim, is the heir of all the ages and the roof and crown of things; but he is also the most expensive of the various breeds of man. As compared with the rest of mankind, he “takes a watch to steer him, and a week to shorten sail,” and the time is drawing near apace when the old, immutable, cruel law of the survival of the fittest is likely to have a new meaning for the race to which that law owes its discovery and formulation. For it may well be questioned whether the white race, albeit we claim for it superiority over all others, is in this sense the fittest to survive, the more so since latter-day morals and modern humanitarianism have imported into the struggle factors that certainly were never contemplated by Nature when she framed her grim and merciless code. Let us examine this view of the question somewhat more closely.

In the natural world the law of survival must be taken to have two meanings, the power of adaptation to environment, and the power to resist and repel successfully all attacks from enemies. In the latter sense the white races have in the past given ample

proof of their ability to survive, as is attested by their conquests of many distant lands and their victories over unnumbered peoples. As regards the power of the white race to adapt itself to an alien environment, however, it must be confessed that no similar success has been achieved. On the contrary, it has been proved beyond dispute that white men, above all others, are woefully vulnerable to climatic influence, and that, even when they can survive for one or two generations in a tropical environment, their descendants are the victims of a swift and steady degeneration that tends to rob them of those very moral and physical qualities which first won for their forbears their foothold in the lands of their adoption. The white man, therefore, can only be regarded as the fittest to survive if his habitat be situated in a temperate climate, and if his survival be made dependent upon an ability to slay and not be slain, rather than upon other qualities such as prolonged endurance, the power of accommodating himself to a low standard of living, and of maintaining himself in good health.

But the age of battle with the rude implements of war is fast passing away from those very lands which the white man's domination has reduced to order, and with its going there also disappears the one immense advantage which, in the past, the white man has shown himself to possess over more primitive peoples,—his ability to conquer in pitched fight in the face of heavy numerical odds. The old, crude, natural warfare, which had for its prize the survival of the stoutest fighter, is giving place to warfare of a more artificial character. What is now needed is not so much the brave heart, the strong right arm, and the energetic brain, as a physique resistant to the assaults of disease in untoward circumstances and capable of nourishing itself adequately on a low diet, a power to endure the disastrous effects of torrid climates, and an ability to beget and rear one's kind in an environment inimical to health and to the perpetuation of the white man's peculiar qualities of mind, character, and body. Also, in these altered conditions, the high standard of living, which has become a necessity of the existence of even the most indigent of the white race, makes it impossible for the man of European descent to compete on equal terms with the natives of the tropics.

Furthermore, it must be remembered that the law and order which the white men have themselves established are serving immensely to fortify the races which the offspring of white men will at some future date be called upon to engage in economic

warfare. By abolishing inter-tribal strife we have put an end to the enormous wastage of savage life which has been proceeding without a check since these tribes first came into contact one with another. By advancing medical science and affording medical aid to the peoples of the tropics, we are further helping the rapid increase of population in lands mainly inhabited by the inferior races, and are delivering them from scourges that of old used to wipe their men out of existence by the thousand. Simultaneously, we are exerting ourselves to spread among them an education of a European type, and are doing our best to arm them with weapons of our invention, and to teach them secrets to the discovery of which we owe our own success. Moreover, we are now busily engaged in filling the minds of those whom we have made our subject peoples with beautiful theories as to the equal rights of man, the equality of the races of mankind, the magnificence of representative institutions, and the claims that every community has to govern itself, for itself, after a manner of its own choosing. All these latter theories, needless to say, are hatched out by the sheltered people who live snugly in the British Isles, who are sublimely ignorant of local conditions, and who once again ignore the existence of colour-prejudice and of the imperative reasons which justify that sentiment.

Meanwhile we are disarming ourselves as quickly as we are arming the forces opposed to us, for Nature clearly contemplated that men, like other beasts of the field, should eat or be eaten, and though we may not wish to be devoured, we are far too tender-hearted in our latter-day developments to contemplate for a moment the possibility of devouring on our own account. The old, natural law, therefore, is being suspended in its operation. Might no longer spells Right in our primers, and accordingly we are gradually, but surely, transferring the balance of power from ourselves to men of the lesser breeds, to men moreover who, unless their past history belies them, are little likely to be fettered, when their hour arrives, by the scruples wherewith we ourselves are held.

This transfer of the balance of power, too, is coming about by reason of the very virtues which have made white men a predominant force in many lands, self-discipline, self-control, self-respect. The white man, inspired by a greater prudence, by a greater measure of providence, by a keener appreciation of the acuteness of the struggle for existence, by a deeper concern for

the welfare of his posterity, marries nowadays, for the most part, when he can afford to marry, which is often comparatively late in life, and having married he begets children with discretion and in moderate numbers. Not so the men of the more undesirable branches of the human family. These take to themselves wives at a very early age, reproduce their kind with a startling rapidity, and establish three generations in the world to the white man's two. They have always done this, but in the past disease and savage warfare combined to keep their multitudes within bounds. The white man's sense of right has removed them from the operation of this natural thinning-out process, and sooner or later the force of numbers must surely tell, more especially as a crowded community of these people can live in plenty amid conditions and upon vegetable foods that would not suffice to maintain a dozen men of European descent.

These altered conditions, it must be remembered, have only begun to operate of recent years, and it is probable that the white man will not realise until too late that men of the lower races, who are little affected by climatic conditions, who thrive on food upon which he cannot nourish himself, who multiply far more quickly than men of European extraction, who can undersell him in the labour market and wax fat where he must starve, are like to push him out of existence. When the issue at last becomes acute the white man, if indeed the power of choice be still left to him, will have to choose between one of two alternatives. He will be forced either to throw his humanitarianism to the winds and to engage in a fierce war of extermination—actual warfare being the only department of the great struggle for existence in which he has shown a marked and unquestioned superiority over his opponents—or he will have to make such terms as he may with the inevitable and accept gradual absorption into the coloured races as his eventual destiny.

Were the issue one that would ever be likely to present itself to his choice as a plain question of immediate policy (as it did, for instance, on a tiny and almost insignificant scale in the days of the Indian Mutiny), were there to be some clear parting of the ways at which he might stand an instant, taking breath and seeking for a decision with a full appreciation of all that lay before him at the end of the road which he might elect to tread—there can be little doubt but that the white man would discard his scruples and plunge into the battle with all his old, relentless energy. Un-

fortunately the decision is one which will have to be arrived at, not in a single place, but in a thousand different and widely-scattered localities, not once and for all, but at various times spreading over a protracted period. Should the decision be in favour of battle, it is white men, in easier circumstances and in safer places, who will be the first to cry shame upon those who begin the fight on behalf of the white race. Once again, the inability of the butterfly upon the road to understand the inner meaning of colour-prejudice will warp the judgment of the stay-at-home, and will make him bid the toad bear the tooth-points of the harrow with patience and contentment.

It may be urged, perhaps, that this was not the case in 1857; that the Mutiny was put down with fire and with sword, with a ruthless energy and a barbarous vindictiveness which have left between Anglo-Indians and the natives of Hindustan many an open sore that will not quickly heal; and that the sympathy of Englishmen at home was throughout on the side of the men who wreaked that dreadful punishment. This, all this, is true; but since the year 1857 public opinion and many other things in the British Isles and out of them have travelled very far indeed. In 1857 the electric telegraph did not connect Fleet Street with the remotest corners of British India; the war-correspondent was a being of recent creation, and the men who filled such posts under the great newspapers were fewer in number, were inspired by a greater sense of national responsibility, by a deeper discretion, and by a smaller love of excitement and of scandal-mongering, than are some of their successors of our own time. In those days the half-penny Press and the Yellow Press did not exist; the nation was perhaps less acutely humanitarian, and was certainly less nervously sentimental than it has since become; and responsible statesmen (though they could have shown better cause than was possible on more recent occasions) did not stoop to seek a party triumph by raising an outcry against "methods of barbarism."

Could history repeat itself, which God forbid, can any of us feel confident that a new Mutiny would be repressed as the Mutiny of 1857 was repressed, or that the attempt to exterminate the white race in India would be punished with the severity, aye, and with the ferocity that alone can serve to impress punishment upon the imagination of an Oriental people who do not easily distinguish between moderation and weakness? Can any man amongst us, who has observed the trend of recent public senti-

ment with a seeing eye, answer those questions in the affirmative? If so, well and good. There still remains some chance that when the hour of conflict dawns, as dawn it surely must sooner or later—in India, in Africa, south, east, west and central, in the United States of America (before any of them it may be), in the West Indian colonies of Great Britain, of France, of Holland,—the white men on the spot will hold their own and will have the sympathy and the support, moral as well as actual, of their own kind in places far removed from the scene of conflict. If an affirmative answer is impossible—and the present writer is bound to confess that this appears to him to be the case,—then absorption of the great white stock into the lower races would seem to be only a question of time, time long-drawn out, it may be, but time inevitable and sure.

For—and this is the lesson which this paper has been written to inculcate,—colour-prejudice is ceasing, nay, has well-nigh ceased, to be what it originally was, a manifestation more or less unreasonable and unjust of blatant pride of race. Instead it must be recognised as an assertion of the instinct of racial self-preservation. The men who have least sympathy with it are precisely those who have not yet felt the pressure of the unnumbered coloured populations which threaten the white race with eventual absorption; the men who carry it to its most logical, and, as stay-at-home Englishmen judge, its most bigoted extremes are those upon whom that pressure is already becoming acute. The sentiment is most keen to-day, it is probable, among white men in the United States and in the West Indies, the white men, be it noted, to whom the prospect of seeing their descendants merged into a race of Mulattos presents itself as an imminent and ever increasing probability. It is regarded as a mere prejudice, with hardly any greater justification than is the common lot of prejudices, by the people of Europe, more especially northern Europe whither the tide of Moorish conquest never penetrated. If any man desires to inform himself of the freedom from the sentiment that is to be found among the lower classes in England, for example, let him examine the records of all that happened when our great Indian Army sent picked men from every regiment to camp near London on the occasion of His Majesty's Coronation, or obtain a census of the number of English women who during the last decade have voluntarily accepted coloured men for their husbands. Yet, for the British

Empire, with its tiny bands of white men and its huge multitudes of coloured races, it is the people at home who determine destiny and its policies, it is they who raise the cries, "India for the Indians!" "Africa for the Africans!", it is they who clamour for the spread of representative institutions, it is they who despise and cry shame upon what they call colour-prejudice, and it is they who are surely but certainly handing over men of their own kind, bound hand and foot, into the grip of forces whose very existence they but dimly apprehend.

It is time surely that these truths should be realised, that the British nation should be taught to make up its mind once for all upon a question of tremendous import, and should be invited to have done with mischievous theories or with specious pretences. The alternative is clear. Either the British nation must accept the belief that government by the majority is not a system capable of universal, eventual application, and having accepted it must declare boldly that white men mean to continue to govern in the lands that white men have won; or they must accept the result of their own handiwork and must deliberately prepare for the ultimate evacuation of territories in which they have themselves suspended the operation of Nature's law of the survival of the fittest in its old, crude and brutal interpretation. If the first alternative be chosen (and to reject it means the eventual absorption of the white by the more numerous and more prolific coloured races) then we must have done with make-believe, with promises that we do not intend to fulfil, with all attempts to train the subject-peoples for a self-government which we do not mean to confer upon them, and we must support our agents when grim necessity forces them to hold with the sword that which the sword has won.

The issue, perhaps, is not so remote as some of us might fancy, though it is like to present itself in a curiously complex and insidious guise. What action will Great Britain take—Great Britain, who has of late contracted the habit of screaming herself hoarse with cries of "Banzai!"—when public opinion in Japan demands the suspension in Japan's favour of the provisions of the law which excludes all who are not white from the Australian Commonwealth? This law, it must be remembered, is regarded by the Australians as a necessity of the economic existence of their country, and something more solid than British

sentiment or British sentimentality will be needed to alter their conviction upon the point.

Here you will have a race that is not white, that is frugal and laborious to an extraordinary degree, that is content with a very low standard of living, as Australian workmen judge such things, and that has recently proved its fitness to survive even in the open battle, which hitherto has been accounted the white man's peculiar field of victory, claiming to win a foothold in a country which is now the exclusive property of a white race, and to enter upon a competitive struggle which can only spell ruin to the working-classes of these great Colonies. What is to be the decision, what the principles upon which that decision is to be based? To such questions no man as yet may supply the answers, but it is possible that in the course of the controversy which must therefrom arise stay-at-home Britons will at last learn something of the true reason and logic that lie at the back of the sentiment called colour-prejudice, upon which it has so long been the custom to expend so much of scorn and of reprobation.

A LOOKER-ON

MISS POOLEY'S LOVE-AFFAIR

"HAVE you ever been in love?" asked Amanda suddenly.

"Why, of course," cried little Miss Pooley, vastly surprised at the question.

"I wish I could be," sighed Amanda. "It must be so exciting to fall——"

"One doesn't fall," interjected Miss Pooley, touching her gold-rimmed glasses deftly; "one glides, or one drifts, as it were."

Amanda mused. "It is rather dangerous to drift, though, isn't it?" she ventured.

"It is just as dangerous to steer, if you have no chart," replied Miss Pooley.

"And hadn't you?"

"Hadn't I what, child?"

"A chart."

Miss Pooley stared at her, then blinked her eyes rapidly. "You are talking nonsense," she said.

"I know," returned Amanda; "I like it. What should I talk but nonsense? Talking sense is so dull." She paused and twisted about restlessly among the cushions of the deep arm-chair. "Your love-affair," she hinted; "was that nonsense?"

"I am not conscious of having confessed to a love-affair," said Miss Pooley, smiling.

"But you did confess, you know, all the same. Do tell me about it; I'll not breathe a word. Was he handsome? Of course he was clever, or you wouldn't have looked at him."

"He wasn't clever," said Miss Pooley; "at least,—not in that way, I mean in the way of book-learning, you understand; but I fancy he was considered good-looking."

"Oh, you couldn't have been in love with him!" cried Amanda.

Miss Pooley smiled again. "Perhaps I should have said," she remarked, in her precise way, "that I have been in the atmosphere of love. It's much the same thing. That's what I meant by gliding, drifting. It's rather like being on the sea in a dark night when there are no stars or moon, and the only lights are the lights on deck, Chinese lanterns for preference, that just stain the water with soft, gleaming meshes of colour. You see the little waves go crisping by, and they always seem to be the same waves; and the darkness enfolds you like a fragrance, and you seem to be suspended as it were in an illimitable void. I am speaking now of my brother's yacht, *THE LADYBIRD*."

"How perfectly lovely!" murmured Amanda.

"I was the oldest member of the party," Miss Pooley went on, lapsing into her usual manner. "I was twenty-four; it seemed a great age then; all the others were in their teens, or only just out of them. I had never felt the least bit old before, and I wouldn't have gone if I had known how young the rest of the party were. But—" she paused,—"I was glad afterwards that I went."

"He was on board, then?"

"Yes. To speak in an accepted, though inexact, way, he was at Sandhurst at that time. He had soft hair that curled rebelliously in tiny stiff tendrils on his temples and about his ears."

"Fancy you noticing!" cried Amanda.

Miss Pooley started. "I was fairly observant, I think," she said simply, "even then, though I was only twenty-four."

"It is when one is twenty-four, or younger, that one does notice such things, of course," said Amanda.

"I am afraid that the boisterous high spirits of the others rather got on my nerves, though," observed Miss Pooley reflectively. "Youth is said to be charming; I have not found it so. I think we do not, as a rule, retain our youth long enough to get used to it; and then, when we do get used to it, our youth is gone, and all that remains is an assumption which has become a hollow mockery."

"How old was he?" asked Amanda.

"He was quite a boy, two years younger than me at least."

"That isn't much."

Miss Pooley looked at Amanda without seeing her. "It is a great deal,—in a man," she answered. "There is more sophisti-

cation in two years, sometimes, than in a whole generation. It all depends on what age you take. Think of the new-born babe and the child of——"

"I would rather think of something a little more mature, please."

"Then think of the unmarried girl and the young mother."

"That is far more interesting."

"To me he seemed extremely young," pursued Miss Pooley, "a mere boy in fact, as I say. He was full of all sorts of wonderful ideas and hopes and emotions."

"He talked to you about them?"

"He talked a good deal,—young men do—and mainly about himself, I think; but that is not always objectionable. After all, we can only aspire to be eloquent on the subject that interests us most. And naturally a young man is the most absorbing topic of conversation in the world,—to himself, and possibly to a woman,—of twenty-four—also."

"I'm sure he was nice," said Amanda. "And I hope you were nice too,—to him, I mean."

"Yes," said Miss Pooley, "though he made me laugh at him occasionally. He was so desperately in earnest about things that really did not matter,—about the state of his heart, for instance."

"And about you as well, I suppose?"

"Yes; I came in," replied Miss Pooley. "But I do not for a moment delude myself into imagining that I was in any way essential or even very important. I think, given his temperament and that exceptional atmosphere, any other woman would have served his purpose equally well. He first came to me for consolation, thinking I was a dear old person, I suppose, in whom he could safely confide his troubles with a hope of sympathy. He had fallen in love—men do undoubtedly fall; there is no gliding or drifting with them—with an impossible girl at Winchester or somewhere. There was no question about her impossibility, so the fall was great; and his people, quite properly disapproving of her, inveigled her away from him—by means of money, I have heard—and then got my brother to invite him to go yachting with us."

"I see," said Amanda seriously.

"I must say," continued Miss Pooley, "that he was rather a tumultuous person. His first advances could hardly be called overtures exactly; they were rather more like sudden descents

on me. He was dreadfully ejaculatory and violent and elliptic. All women, he said, were alike. He said that frequently, so frequently that I suspected him of not believing it. He usually began and finished his tirades with that sweeping generalisation ; but he said also that he could see I was different from other women. I had common-sense. Beware of the young man who accuses you of common-sense, Amanda ! He found me restful, soothing, I suppose ; and I know he considered me frightfully old, at first. In fact, my elderliness continued to distress him even afterwards, when—— ‘What a man looks for,’ he said, ‘is a woman who understands him.’ But though he professed to give me credit for understanding him perfectly, he was still at considerable pains to go on explaining himself to me at every possible opportunity. It appeared that he was not at all the man he seemed to be ; so few men are, I find. ‘A fellow,’ he said, ‘does not go about handing round bits of his inmost soul to everybody as if they were bonbons.’ From this I gathered that I was peculiarly privileged. ‘Mind you,’ he said also, ‘there are good and bad of both sexes.’ But he did not state the proportions in which he had found them in our sex ; I fancy, however, that the percentage of goodness was deplorably low. ‘I must forget her—that’s all,’ he would say. And very soon he did ; but I could not.”

“What happened ?” inquired Amanda breathlessly.

“The usual thing,” answered Miss Pooley.

“But—what is that ?”

“I caught his heart on the rebound apparently. You see,” she pointed out, “I didn’t wear glasses in those days.”

“I wondered,” faltered Amanda, reassured.

“There is something about a ship, I think, that fosters the tender passion.”

“You always call it the tender passion, don’t you, Miss Pooley ?” interrupted Amanda.

“Of course. Why not, my dear ?” exclaimed Miss Pooley.

“It sounds rather mid-Victorian—old fashioned—that’s all,” stammered Amanda.

Miss Pooley looked severe. “As I was saying,” she resumed, “it is probably the pleasant monotony of things in general that is responsible, the routine, you know, and possibly the sea-air. I have always noticed that affairs more often come to a climax even at the seaside than in an inland town. And of

course, at the seaside there are things to do, distractions, fresh faces, a continual change in the venue of one's daily occupations; if not actually in the nature of them; but on board a yacht there is practically nothing else to do but look at the sea and at one another all the time—so long as the weather keeps fine, that is, and it was perfect weather throughout during THE LADYBIRD'S cruise to Oporto."

"How absolutely lovely!" sighed Amanda again.

"And another thing," said Miss Pooley; "the days seem so very long on board a ship—I don't mean tedious, quite the contrary—but long, you know, in the sense that so much is compressed into the twenty-four hours, of feeling, of growth, of development. One wakes up, aged twenty-four, as it were, and one goes to bed—oh, any age! At eight o'clock in the morning you are on quite a distant footing with someone; at eight o'clock in the evening you and he are taking out your hearts and showing them to one another like two schoolboys with new watches. A month in a hotel does not lend a single touch of that intimacy to your intercourse which an afternoon of idling on deck will permanently colour it with for the rest of your life. You do really feel that you have known one another for years after a day spent together in the small, delightful world of a ship." A faint flush tinged Miss Pooley's cheek.

"I should love to go yachting," breathed Amanda. "I never have. I wonder——"

Again Miss Pooley started. "It was on our third day out that he proposed to me," she said rather loudly. "Of course——"

"Proposed to you!" exclaimed Amanda. "Did he really propose? I thought—but," she added doubtfully, "surely you have left the best part out."

"Yes," said Miss Pooley; "but one can only relate events, and the best part was absolutely eventless; that was the supreme beauty of it. It was just a delicious state of being; a sense of airy living in a castle of cloud-shapes, with walls all woven of rosy curtains and misty, filmy draperies, through which one caught only vague, dim glimpses of the outer world of spars and sails and ropes, of the boundless floor of the sea, all strewn with glittering jewels, and the everlasting, all-pervading sky above, where other fairy ships seemed to float along with us, the decks heaped high with gold and manned by gods in purple

robes. It was a place only faintly tangible, that outer world in which human figures moved and talked and came together and parted, all within the narrow compass of the deck. At table one ate Barmecide feasts and uttered the inimitably inane remarks that one makes in a silly dream. Scents and sounds were muffled, the odour of cigar-smoke and the strong, salt savour of the sea, the sounds of laughter and music when one of the men brought out his guitar and we all sang. It was a dream spun out of moonshine then. The air had a soft, palpable quality like silk; and the outlines of things were all silver-bright and glowing, seeming to have no real substance at all, so that we might have been a lot of jolly ghosts together."

"How perfectly lovely it must have been!" sighed Amanda yet once more.

"But when he proposed to me," Miss Pooley went on, "that was of course the end. The veil that had hidden us from one another was rent in twain, and the face of truth gibbered at me through the torn rags of illusion. It looked cruel, pitiless, ugly, incredibly vulgar and jeering." Miss Pooley shuddered ever so slightly. When she spoke again her voice had fallen to its wonted flat, conversational note. "I told him he was foolish," she said. "I pointed out the disparity in our ages."

"It was only two years!" cried Amanda eagerly.

"It seemed much more than that, much more. I felt immeasurably older than he was, and horribly clear-sighted. I knew perfectly well that he was quite mistaken in thinking that he loved me; propinquity alone was responsible for his,—his passing aberration. I told him (what was true enough) that he could find someone else some day who would prove a far better wife for him, one infinitely more suitable than I could ever hope to be. That horrible clear-sightedness of mine made me aware of our gross unsuitability to one another. I knew that he would speedily tire of me, as I feared I should tire of him. And even then I had the celibate tendency; marriage did not attract me. Men were adorable,—as gods are—but they were out of place as breakfast companions."

"Oh, Miss Pooley," pleaded Amanda, "don't,—don't be bitter!"

"I am not," said Miss Pooley; "but he was—intensely bitter, and angry. He called me a flirt. It seemed odd that he should call me that, considering that three days ago he had been dying

for love of another woman ; but I forgave him, though he had hurt me wantonly, and I did not point out to him how utterly inconsistent his conduct was throughout. I tried to get him to ask me still to be his friend : I wanted us to be friends always ; I wanted exceedingly still to retain a place in his regard, his life, however lowly. But there was neither ruth nor justice left in my nice boy. He pished and pshaw'd and laughed harshly, and swung away and left me. . . . The lights of the harbour were kindling on the black, craggy fringe of the vast as he left me. An hour or two later we went on shore. When we re-embarked he did not accompany us, and on our return voyage I had to defend him from the contempt and ridicule of my brother. It was not a happy time for me ! ”

Amanda insinuated her hand into Miss Pooley's. “ I am so sorry,” she murmured. “ But still I can't see why you should have sent him away like that.”

“ That is because your eyes are too bright as yet, my dear,” said Miss Pooley.

“ And have you ever met him since ? ”

“ Yes. It is because I have so often met him since that I know now I acted wisely,” replied Miss Pooley. “ I was not at all sure about it at the time. I used to wonder what perverse spirit in me it was that had made me send him away,—until we met again, a few months later. He was engaged to another girl, the right girl, by that time ; and I saw,—what I might have seen through tears, if I had married him—that he would have wondered what on earth had ever made him think he cared for me.”

There was a long pause, and then Amanda asked softly : “ What was his name, Miss Pooley, — his Christian name, I mean ? ”

“ It was an unusual one.”

“ Ah, do tell it me.”

“ An old-world name, common enough in the Middle Ages, I believe, but now—the name was Piers.”

“ Piers ! ” echoed Amanda, starting up with bright, wide eyes.

“ Piers ! —but that is papa's name ! ”

“ I know, dear,” said Miss Pooley.

EDWIN PUGH

for love of another woman; but I forgave him, though he had hurt me wrongfully, and I did not point out to him how unbecomingly his conduct was throughout. I tried to get him to ask me still to be his friend; I wanted us to be friends at last; I wanted exceedingly still to retain a place in his regard, his life, however lowly. But there was neither truth nor justice left in my mind.

THE POLLUTION OF OUR RIVERS

IN this Year of Grace and County Councils the condition of some of our most charming rivers is deplorably bad. It has become a generally accepted proposition that the pollution of streams in the neighbourhood of manufacturing towns is a very right and proper procedure, and if a river in which our great-grandfathers could catch trout yields no better harvest now than an occasional dead cat nobody grumbles. Perhaps it would be more correct to say that the people who grumble do not count; they are mere folk who would like to see England beautiful, and believe that the manufacturing works which spoil a fine stream do not justify their existence. Such unpractical fellows are rightly despised by all hard-headed men of business, who do not mind how hideous the countryside looks so long as it yields good profits to the company in which they hold shares. I have often thought that if wealthy manufacturers, factory-owners and shareholders could be compelled to live within a hundred yards of their business premises, factories would soon cease to be ugly, garden-cities would become the rule instead of the exception, and rivers would once more hold water, instead of a combination of ink and treacle.

It is perhaps useless to protest against the pollution of a stream in the neighbourhood of a manufacturing town; but it is permissible to complain of the fashion in which small rivers that run through the heart of purely agricultural land are contaminated by the lack of a proper scheme for the disposal of sewage in the neighbourhood of towns through which they pass. Most of us who spend part of our life in the country could name one or two rivers that would provide splendid quarters for trout, and can now do no more than support a few coarse fish and nourish conditions that make for epidemics and fever in time of hot weather and drought. There

is no justification for such a condition. Everybody knows the danger that it involves, all are agreed that the town, or towns, responsible ought to mend their manners ; but an affair that is everybody's business is nobody's business, and the local inspector of nuisances is generally so busy straining at the local gnats that he can swallow a whole caravan of camels without effort.

The other morning I walked for some two miles along the banks of a river that was once famous for its trout. The railhead is some seven or eight miles away, and there is no factory within twice that distance. Everywhere one sees well preserved woodland and green pastures, with red-tiled, white-walled farmhouses scattered here and there, encircled by orchards, out-buildings, and corn stacks. There is a suggestion of prosperity about the country : one breathes bracing air ; but, for all that, the river, the little river, once a shining jewel in a setting of lush pastures, is busy preparing an epidemic against next summer, or the summer that comes after, just because the old town on the hill-side that dominates the landscape has no sewage-scheme and no intention of adopting one. The river-bed is choked and foul ; rushes and noisome weeds of every description grow in all directions ; the soft black mud, fully two feet deep, has a decidedly unpleasant odour, and the few fish that linger in the pools are not in good condition. Now and again the riparian owners attempt in half-hearted fashion to clean out their portion of the river-bed : some enthusiasts have even put down fish ; but the fish died, the weeds sprang up again, and only the winter floods avail to keep the river from becoming an active danger to health.

I asked a considerable landowner why he took no steps to bring about a better state of things, and pointed out that the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries might be approached, or the Inspector of Nuisances might be urged to do his very obvious duty. The usual explanation was forthcoming. "If one went to the Government," said my friend, "certain commissioners would be appointed to inquire into the condition of the town, a very expensive drainage system would be arranged, and rates would become a terrible burden for the next five and twenty years."

"By doing nothing," I rejoined, "you probably sacrifice a certain number of children and delicate adults to the Fever

God every year. You certainly spoil a beautiful river and depreciate the value of your property."

"That is so," he admitted; "and the only middle course would appear to lie in summoning a meeting of the townsfolk and arranging some simple and effective means of dealing with the trouble on lines that would command the approval of a good engineer."

"Why not do that, then?" I suggested, and my friend replied that local people do not wish to be bothered. They have grown accustomed to seeing the river polluted, they have no time to fish, they hold themselves immune from epidemics, and they have a rooted aversion from rates. All forms of taxation appear unjust in their eyes; consequently the bad conditions go on, and the chances are that nothing short of a serious outbreak of fever will bring reason to the neighbourhood.

If the problem of river pollution should be solved, the sporting instinct will probably deserve the credit. Fishermen are bestirring themselves to develop their sport in all directions, and rivers that might be kept clean and provide good fishing will not be allowed to remain foul for an indefinite period. Some sporting owner, who is not greatly concerned by the spectre of high rates, will set the machinery of the law in motion. Towns and villages that pollute the water will be forced into more salubrious methods; the stream will be cleaned, and will remain clean. Doubtless there will be many to exclaim against the selfishness that sends the rates up for purely private purposes; but in the long run purity is economy, and to preserve a dirty river at the cost of an occasional epidemic, and constant small sacrifices of human life, is as unbusiness-like a proceeding as ever a long-headed case-hardened countryman was party to. Incidentally, even the farmers would have some return for the outlay, apart from increased health, because, where the rivers are foul and the mud gets deeper year by year, cattle and foals are lost from time to time; they are tempted down to the river to drink, and are smothered in the mud. The loss to ornithologists when the river is hopelessly foul need hardly be set down here. Those of us who are familiar with the grebes, reed-warblers, ouzels, and kingfishers, that frequent clean running water, are bound to regret the condition of streams which seem to harbour nothing but a few unhappy-looking water-rats.

S. L. BENSUSAN

A LOST POSSESSION

STEAMING between Malta and Marseilles some of us may have caught a glimpse of splintered peaks, a wild sky-line flung against the blue. Perhaps we learned from one of the ship's company that it was Majorca, but in any case we had forgotten all about it before. To most Englishmen the Balearic group means still less, a name on the map of the Mediterranean, a memory of early schooldays, a geographical expression. It meant more in 1756, when an angry mob clamoured under the windows of George the Second for lost Minorca. It meant far more to the ill-starred Admiral Byng thrown as a sop to popular fury,—in the teeth of Pitt and the Commons—by a king who trembled lest Hanover should be deprived of that lucrative appanage, the throne of England. We cannot see Minorca from the steamer's deck ; it lies below the horizon, for its loftiest hill is scarce higher than Inkpen, the tallest of our chalk downs. It has none of the Alpine grandeur of its larger sister, but it has a magnificent harbour. The old distich,

June, July, August, and Port Mahon
Are the best ports in the Mediterranean,

may or may not have been first uttered by Andrea Doria, but no seaman will deny its truth, and the land-locked expanse winding into the heart of the hills tells us why Minorca, almost equidistant from France, Spain, and Africa, was a cherished British possession for well-nigh a century. The slips and sheds, and the old guns serving for warping-posts, bear a strong family likeness to Woolwich and Deptford. We shall find other reminders of home when we climb into the white town shining atop of the brown cliffs like the sugar-crust on a slice of bride cake. There is a familiarity about the streets of Mahon which is puzzling at first, until suddenly it flashes upon us that all the houses have sash-windows and all the doors have fan-lights.

Moreover, they are furnished with the old English door-latch, the latch with the thumb-plate of the time ere the world had learned to turn the shining knob-handle. The pressure of the thumb and the accompanying clack precedes the entrance into every shop, café, and dwelling-house in Mahon. As we begin to take in details we note that the shutter-fastenings are of the pattern approved in the earlier half of the last century, that the shop-doors are made with a hatch, the upper half glazed with old crown glass retaining the bullseye in the centre of the panes, that every street has bricked pavements neatly kerbed. It is all undeniably English ; but to find its counterpart in England we must hunt up dim old corners in some cathedral town or decayed sea-port where such things linger as vestiges of a forgotten past. At Mahon they are a survival. Smiths and carpenters work on patterns brought here by the English in the eighteenth century. They were novelties then, and they have not yet been superseded. It is not in domestic architecture alone that our forefathers have left their impress. We were surprised to come across a group of urchins playing at marbles ; amazed when we heard them call the game by its English name, and dumbfounded when one youngster admonished another to "knuckle down." They had never seen an English boy, nor are they ever likely to see one ; game and name have been handed down from the time when their forbears played with the children of the British garrison more than a hundred years ago.

English troops first set foot on Minorca in 1708 ; they left it in 1802. Don Bartolomé Escudero, the British Vice-Consul, has drawn up a list of English words in current use. Long as it is he says it is by no means complete. It chanced that we were able to add to it one afternoon at San Luis, where an old lady pointing to her fig-trees lamented the depredations of the *birdis*. The artisan talks of his jackplane, rule, and hammer, of a screw, lath, and chalk. The housewife uses a kettle, is proud of the panels of her sideboard, makes a pudding, and orders a shank of beef for *brou*, which is broth. These and many other words are embedded in the offshoot of the old language of Oc which is the Minorcan tongue. They are no longer exotic and probably few suspect their origin. Some have become obsolete with us, like *tea-board* ; others are used in a particular sense, as *stick*, for billiard cue, and *play*, which is applied only to the game of fives. "Stop, please," "hallo," "in," and "out," are

universal ; they are likely to last longer than the sash-windows and fan-lights. Mahon boasts a creditable football team, and the people go to a match at football where in Majorca they would go to a bull-fight. In Minorca bull-fights are unknown, a fact indicating the marked contrast presented by the sister islands, apparent in fifty other ways. The leading professional men have organised a propaganda of popular education, and give courses of lectures somewhat on the lines of the University Extension system. The younger members of the Ateneo have formed a league for the encouragement of athletics among the people. The Ateneo is a literary club admirably managed, with a good library and a liberal supply of current periodical literature, English, French, Spanish, and German. British visitors are very rare, but it is not impossible that one may chance to read these words at the Ateneo, and he will bear witness to the generous hospitality of that institution on a remote storm-lashed island some twenty-five miles long by fifteen broad. Music is assiduously cultivated by the Mahonais, and the town maintains a really good Italian opera company in winter.

Mahon numbers eighteen thousand souls, and the old capital, Ciudadela, about eight thousand. Ciudadela is at the other end of the island, twenty-five miles off ; it is clerical and conservative, and has some fine old houses and quaint arcaded streets. Half way between Ciudadela and Mahon is Mercadal, a tiny town at the foot of Monte Toro, a hill about one thousand feet high, from the top of which the whole island lies below you like a relief map. The coast is deeply indented. Fornells, on the north, is a larger harbour than Mahon, but not so sheltered. The country is pretty, undulating, and studded with timber, mostly wild olive. All the trees turn their backs to the north and stretch out their limbs imploringly towards Africa. Wind is the scourge of Minorca, placed as it is in the midst of the Gulf of Lyons.

Majorca is better off, protected by the barrier of its high northern coast range. But Minorca has some compensation in its *barrancas*, those strange fissures which cleave its surface like the Colorado cañons in miniature. They are natural forcing-houses and choked with vegetation. Moreover, the smaller island has what is denied to her larger sister—pasturage. The butter is delicious, and Minorcan cheese is famous on the mainland. Poultry-breeders at home know something of Minorcan

fowls ; in their native land they live up to their reputation, the eggs are abundant and uncommonly large. Another speciality of the island is the partridge, a bird of unwonted size and delicate flavour. The lobsters are renowned and are exported to Spain. It is hardly necessary to say that Mayonnaise is a Minorcan discovery. It was in 1756, when the French were besieging us in Fort St. Philip, that old Marechal de Richelieu, being hungry, was fain to dine on cold fish, the only thing the Mahon innkeeper had in his larder. Richelieu liked the dressing, asked for the recipe, and it figured in his *MEMOIRES as sauce Mahonnaise*, and that is how the world came by Mayonnaise, a sufficient testimony to the *cuisine* of the Minorcans, though the way in which they boil a potato (that rare culinary accomplishment) is perhaps a better. In their peculiar aptitude for plain roast and boiled we again discern the hand of England. The fare is a delightful surprise to one fresh from a sojourn on the Spanish mainland. Nor is the change less pleasant from the heavy wines of Alicante and Tarragona to the lighter vintages of Minorca ; San Clemente is a table beverage of high character ; and at Alayor the singularly delicate wine still justifies the claims put forward for it by John Armstrong, Engineer to his Majesty, who spent ten years on the island (1738-1748), and whose book, published in 1752, is the only English work on Minorca. The capers, which Armstrong tells us the officers' wives acquired such skill in preparing, still grow wild on the walls, and the English barracks, where he had his quarters, still stand and are called by their old name though they serve another purpose, that of a casino. The notary at Alayor showed us some English weights and coins, relics of the occupation, and some books once belonging to officers, among them a volume of *THE LONDON MAGAZINE* for 1757 containing much relating to Byng and the loss of Minorca in the previous year.

We saw a good many coloured prints of the kind now so sought after by collectors, mostly portraits of George the Third and Queen Charlotte ; and at a house in Ciudadela there was a set of chairs of the early Georgian period which would cause fierce competition in a London auction-room. Among family portraits are some of Minorcans who entered the British service and in the Ayuntamiento at Mahon is one of Arquimbau who attained the rank of general and was at Waterloo. But the most notable vestige of British domination is the excellent

road which traverses, and almost bisects, the island between Fort St. Philip and Ciudadela.

It was made by General Kane in 1713-15 and still bears his name *Cami de Kane* while his work is commemorated in a Latin inscription on the obelisk outside Mahon. Richard Kane governed the island for twenty-three years and died there in 1736. He had seen much service before he went to Minorca; he had been wounded at Blenheim, commanded a regiment at Malplaquet, and taken part in the Canadian Expedition. His book of tactics won praise from Wolfe: his NARRATIVE OF THE CAMPAIGNS OF WILLIAM THE THIRD AND QUEEN ANNE is valuable to the student of military history; but his chief life-work was done in Minorca, where the name of Don Ricardo is still one to conjure with, not in connection with feats of arms but rather with apples. *Pomas de Kane*, Kane's apples, still bear his name on the market and in the orchard, as they did when he introduced them. He introduced other things, horned cattle and other live stock, new crops and improved methods of cultivation, whereby the value of land was doubled; and, far more than all these, he introduced justice and a fair return for labour. He loved the island, and the islanders looked upon him as a father; a contemporary writer said that no father could have studied the interests of his family more than he did theirs. His gentleness endeared him to the people perhaps more even than his wise rule, and when he died on December 30th, 1736, how keenly his loss was felt was shown by the vast crowds which followed his remains to their last resting-place in Fort St. Philip.

A Minorcan in London would make his cenotaph in Westminster Abbey a place of pilgrimage. How many Londoners could point out its site in the western aisle of the north transept? How many would know even the name of Kane? But at Mahon his memory is still green. Of the many anecdotes concerning him one may be told for the sake of the grotesque freak of nomenclature it embodies. There is a variety of plum in Minorca rejoicing in the odd designation of *neversaw*. It was a habit of Kane's to stroll through the market of a morning. One day an old dame seated behind a basket of the plums in question asked him what they were called in England. "I never saw any there," replied the Governor. The words were seized and they are *prunas de neversaw* to this day.

The story illustrates Kane's relation to the islanders, with whom he stands for England, and hence perhaps the friendly feelings they entertain towards us. It is one hundred and four years since we left them, yet it may be questioned whether our influence is not morally greater than it is now at Malta. Minorca has had many masters since the pre-historic era of the builders of the *talayots*, the Stonehenge and Avebury of the island. Without taking for historical fact the legend that Mahon was founded by Mago, brother of Hannibal, it is certain that Phœnician, Greek, and Carthaginian preceded the Romans. After them came in turn Vandals, Visigoths, the Franks of Charlemagne, then the Arabs, the Genoese and the Moors until 1286, when they were driven out by the Conquistador, and Minorca shared the fortunes of Aragon until the union of that kingdom with Castile brought it under the dominion of Spain. In speech, laws, and customs, the people are Aragonese. They can converse with a Catalan or a Provençal more readily than with a Spaniard of Castile. Spanish is the language of the schools, not of the family. The cleanliness of Minorca is phenomenal. The streets are spotless ; so are the houses, within and without, in the towns as in the hamlet, in the mansion as in the smallest cot. The traveller need never fear to seek shelter in the humblest dwelling. The linen on bed and board will be snowy, fragrant of herbs, and edged with the delicate native embroidery. Every detail of the domestic economy will be as clean as the outside of the house, and that is white-washed every Saturday ; it is a work of supererogation, but the housewife would as lief think of omitting it as of neglecting the parish Mass on the morrow.

The Minorcans are not a demonstrative people, but they have an inborn courtesy which expresses itself in acts of helpful attention. The stranger may wander where he will without fear. Serious crime is unknown, and petty offences are exceedingly rare. There is quiet charm in the landscape with its white farmsteads dotted about the gentle slopes and in the prettily timbered valleys. Very pleasant are our memories of the kindly country-folk, and the children in their gay kirtles. The population is a well-clad and especially a well-shod one, the foot-gear of Minorca being excellent. Among the richer folk we experienced much unpretending and sincere hospitality, distinguished by a delightful mingling of simplicity and old-world

courtliness. We rambled through kitchens, bakehouse, and granary, and into the joyous nursery. The dogs shared the hearth in the dining-room, and in the stately saloons, hung with family portraits ranging back three centuries, we examined the heirlooms, rare brocades and quaint jewels, under the soft radiance of modern sprays, for the houses have been electrically lighted this many a year. There is an odd juxtaposition of the old and the new in Minorcan life.

As we entered the great parish church of St. Mary one day, our breath was fairly taken away by a vision of knights in complete armour ranged before the high altar. Had we broken in upon some unearthly spectral rite, or were we spirited back to the days of the Crusades? We learned afterwards that it was the feast of Cornelius the Centurion, and the steel-clad knights were members of a guild under the patronage of that saint. They wore their visors down or we might have recognised friends among them; yet outside the motor-omnibus was ready to start for Ciudadela, and a few evenings later we discovered some of the band, divested of their panoply, busily studying Esperanto.

Apart from the impress of the English on the aspect of Mahon, many traces of England are to be found in street nomenclature such as the Calle de Hanover, and in the Naval Hospital on the King's Island in the harbour. But the most extensive are at Villa Carlos, the suburb near the harbour-mouth reached by Kane's Road, a short two miles from Mahon. Villa Carlos is still sometimes called by its old name of George Town, and one of its streets bears the name of Stuart, who was Governor in 1798. The old barracks are occupied by Spanish troops, but Fort St. Philip is a melancholy waste of stone-heaps, having one side on the harbour, the other on St. Stephen's Cove, and its apex on the open sea. The rock-hewn scarps and ditches, twenty and thirty feet deep, still remain, but the masonry work was demolished after the siege of 1782. We laboured nearly thirty years on this vast stronghold, and it is imposing even in its abandonment. A footpath along its base leads to the rock-bound St. Stephen's Cove, a narrow inlet running its nose against a luxuriant garden. On a height beyond is Fort Marlborough, a sturdy ruin, one of our earliest works, dating from 1710. There is an impressive intensity in the silence of places which once vibrated with human activity. Here, in 1756, the gallant octogenarian Blakeney defending the inde-

fensible never saw his bed for seventy nights. Here, in 1782, Murray's emaciated heroes—six hundred out of two thousand five hundred at the beginning of the siege—marched out with all the honours of war, and moved the enemy to generous tears by their valiantly borne sufferings.

However, it was not so much the historic struggles, as the forgotten incidents of the daily life of our countrymen here that had a fascination for us. When Stanhope landed in 1708 morions were scarce out of fashion, and officers wore the flowing full-bottomed wig. We tried to people the solitude with those who wore the Ramillies tie in later days, and men in black gaiters reaching to mid-thigh, and clubbed pigtails, paced the worn pavement of the old barracks at George Town. We saw Dr. Auchmutty planting his currant and gooseberry bushes from England, and heard him some years later (it was in 1740) lamenting the continuous degeneration of the fruit in size and flavour. Sweeter far to the good doctor was his native bush-fruit than the grapes of Minorca, of which there must have been plenty, for on the next Christmas day the soldiers and sailors of the garrison consumed eight hundred and forty-three gallons of wine. Then came the final scene. We had seen a contemporary drawing of this at Mahon, when, on a June morning in 1802, the British troops, with sprigs of olive in their mitre-shaped shakos in token of the peace of Amiens, were drawn up here on the parade-ground at George Town previous to their departure for the new possession of Malta. Minorca had seen the last of the English.

That they have not been forgotten this paper has essayed to show. Nor is the memory an unkindly one. On the golden winter afternoon when the writer had been indulging in these idle musings at George Town the proprietress of the little inn at the corner, opposite the church, ran out and thrust into his hand an illustrated journal with the portraits of Alfonso the Thirteenth and Princess Ena. The good woman's face was radiant at the thought that an English princess was to be the Spanish Queen.

Z. D. F.

THE FAILURE OF THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

The purpose of the Elementary School is to form and strengthen the character and to develop the intelligence of the children entrusted to it, and to make the best use of the school-years available in assisting both girls and boys, according to their different needs, to fit themselves, practically as well as intellectually, for the work of life.—*Introduction to the Board of Education Code.*

THE intention of this paper, in spite of its somewhat equivocal title, is neither alarmist nor deprecatory ; for no one appreciates more keenly than the writer the excellent work done by our folk-schools. Rather is it the author's intention to set forth in what particulars the schools fail to realise the aims of the Board of Education ; to note where the methods are at variance with the ideals enumerated above ; and, tentatively perhaps, but with conviction and sympathy, to suggest remedies so far as lies in his power. It is not proposed to deal with the greatest anomaly of the whole system—its dependence upon local finance. To treat of our national education as such an anomaly would be to write of the crippling influence of the small-minded ratepayer and his representatives, of the apathy and lack of appreciation amongst the classes most vitally concerned, and of the unavoidable misdirection of funds due to overlapping authorities and want of a central management. If such had been the writer's intention, it might have been that he would have counselled "putting the job out to contract," or, at least, inaugurating a government monopoly in elementary education. But his intention will be best fulfilled by a suggestive paper which is written, to some extent, from within, and which does not aim at being exhaustive.

From the excerpt at the head of this article, it will be seen that the primary object of the elementary school is stated to be the formation of character. How is it, then, that the generality

of our youth are so callow, so thoughtless, and so utterly indifferent to self-improvement? Perhaps, it may be urged, this is a question of the development of taste rather than of character. To a limited extent this may be so; but actually taste and character are so commingled that it is difficult to dissociate them. For both taste and character are the ultimate effect of that subtle thing called, for want of a better word, "tone." It seems barely credible that the primary object of our schools is so little understood, that this vague attribute of a child or of a school should be confused with conceptions of order and smartness. Yet it would even appear that certain educational bodies would have some difficulty in defining it, when one of the most enlightened of the county authorities sets its drill inspectors to supervise "tone and discipline" as though these were synonymous with mechanical precision.

Omitting the moral aspect of character, the chief faults which the writer notes in children about to take their places in adult life are superficiality, helplessness, and a glaring lack of initiative. It would seem that faults of this nature are the result of mistaken methods, and that the adoption of heuristic teaching would entirely eradicate them. But the mistake is not one of method. It lies in the curriculum: it is to be found in the scant time available for the numerous subjects taught. Hence a conflict between the ideal and the practicable. To apply heuristic methods to the teaching of a present-day curriculum would necessitate a school-life of seventy years, rather than one of seven years. If it be desired to inculcate thoughtfulness in place of superficiality, confidence in place of helplessness, and initiative in place of an absence of that quality, more definite curricula must be insisted upon, besides a reduction in the educational pabulum. This is not to recommend instruction in "tabloid" form, but it is to counsel a more suitable choice of mental food. Only by this means shall be ensured mental healthfulness, which is, after all, only another name for character.

The conflict between the ideal and the practicable becomes even more apparent when the general intelligence of the children, specifically mentioned in the valuable definition of the purpose of the elementary school, is discussed. In spite of the "Suggestions to Teachers and Others concerned in the work of Public Elementary Schools," the actual freedom of curriculum

may become a menace to the efficiency of the schools. For this liberty of curriculum gives inspectors, managers, and authorities the opportunity, as individuals or as bodies, to introduce their special subjects to the detriment of the general instruction. This has resulted in the congested condition of our present-day curricula. The platform of education has been broadened, but the more important work of elevating it has yet to be carried out.

A determining factor in this unsatisfactory condition of things is to be found in the system of appointment to the inspectorate. It is a melancholy fact that the efficiency of our schools is at the mercy of specialists, many of whom substitute for a practical acquaintance with school-keeping an overpowering enthusiasm for their own particular subjects. This, in view of the power wielded by them in matters of curriculum and of internal school-government, must result in a regrettable loss of proportion in the relative value of the subjects taught. The lack of an all-round practical acquaintance on the part of these gentlemen, who are usually university men of considerable culture but specialised attainments, is a strong plea for the appointment of men who are experts in the details of school-keeping under the conditions which obtain in elementary schools.

It is not to be supposed, however, that the onus of injudicious instruction rests entirely with the inspectorate or with the administrative authority. The teachers themselves who draw up the courses of instruction subject to the approval of the inspectors, in many cases fail to formulate satisfactory schemes. The value of the instruction is safe-guarded only by the most careful correlation of subjects. Yet correlation is often imperfectly understood. In place of actual correlation, what is more often achieved is merely connection. Correlation is a modern catch-word, but what it implies was well understood by many teachers under the old régime. That it is the remedy for the chaotic instruction of our modern schools is indubitable; but by reason of the innate conservatism of those who cannot forget the nature of the instruction they themselves received, instead of a real correlation of studies we get a grafting of new methods upon the old. This unhappily results in a surfeit of imperfectly connected material prepared for the hapless youth attending the elementary schools. Correlation, as the writer takes it, and not in the acceptance of many (amongst whom the Board of

Education is not blameless), involves the omission of a great deal of instruction rather than the inclusion of everything. Surely it is preferable to include less, if the instruction may thereby be improved. This naturally calls for the careful supervision of the schemes prepared, and for the elimination of subjects whose aims are sufficiently covered by other portions of the curriculum. It is not suggested that the inspectorate should deal in an arbitrary manner with the thoughtful schemes of earnest teachers; rather is it hoped that they should be so enthusiastic concerning the real purpose of the education given, as to make their own specialities subservient to its intention. Satisfactory schemes would be further ensured by the appointment as organisers, advisers, or inspectors, of practical teachers who understand exactly what it is possible to expect under the conditions obtaining in elementary schools.

Continental schools, it is urged, manage to carry out heavily-loaded schemes of instruction; but it should be pointed out that only parts of the entire schemes apply to any particular scholars. Then, in many continental schools, the children attend six days in the week, and are expected to do two hours preparation per day in addition to the hours of instruction. This results in forty hours' study per week as compared with twenty-seven in England.

Children—the Board of Education announces—are to be fitted “practically as well as intellectually” for the work of life. And this announcement raises the vexed question as to what part of school-life should be occupied by practical subjects. The continual adding of subjects to the curriculum must end somewhere; yet the clamour for hand-and-eye training and technical instruction induces further additions of handicrafts and kindred subjects without any extension of school hours. In this connection of practical subjects a writer on some educational aspects has recently made some very pertinent remarks which point out certain dangers to which the new subjects expose the children. With regard to school-gardening, he says:

It is approached as if it were a game; the interest of it is the chief thing thought of, so that the first motive put before the child is one which has no necessary connection with real work at all. The child, in fact, is only encouraged to play at what is no child's play, and gets a false idea of it which unfits him for the real thing later in life. Such I believe to be the feeling of country people towards these so-called practical subjects. . .

The same boy in the school gardens makes no acquaintance with work there. He is only being amused by one or two operations which happen to be incidental to some kind of work.

An indictment such as this would lead us rather to let child-nature follow its own promptings in the direction of practical subjects, and to devote valuable time to the more imperative subjects. Froebel's remarks on the formative instinct of children are worth quoting at length. He says :

But our energetic Boy will not be always found on Height, or in Depth and Shade. The same endeavour to get Round-, Over-, and Insight, that took him to Hill and Dale, is with him on the Plain. See: there at the Edge of his Father's Ground, he makes a little Garden; there, in the Wheel-rut, or by the Ditch, he mimics the Course of a River; here, he gets a nearer and clearer view of the Fall and Pressure of Water by his own little Water-wheel; here he studies the Floating of a Bit of thin Wood, or Bark, on the Water which he has banked into a Pool. . . . The Boy at this Age, too, is so fond of occupying himself with any Kind of shapeable Matter, as Sand or Clay, that we might call it a vital Element for him. *Having once gained the Feeling of Power he seeks to rule over Matter*, to control it; everything must submit to his Impulse of Shaping and Forming. . . . Thus each one shapes his own World; for the Feeling of Strength that is one's *own*, soon requires the Possession of a *Space and Material that is one's own*. Let the Boy's Realm, his Province, be it a corner of the Garden, the House, or the Room; be it the Space of a Band-box, a Trunk, or a Drawer; let it be a Cave, a Hut, a Garden-plot; he, the human-being, the Boy at this Age, must have a real, material Centre of his own, best of all if it be self-made or self-chosen.

The kernel of the whole matter is in these three last words, "self-made or self-chosen." By all means let the boy have his garden, or his carpenter's bench; but let him have it after, not during, the ordinary school hours.

A favourite argument for the inclusion of technical subjects in an elementary school curriculum is that the custom of apprenticing to the various crafts and callings has fallen into abeyance. But it should be borne in mind that apprenticeship was never incidental to school-age. Again, the technical teaching which we are so prone to admire in continental schools is not scattered broadcast; it is conducted on a wise method of selection, based upon individual needs and capabilities, which it would be well to emulate in England. It would be wiser still to determine at the very outset whether or not the folk-school is the true place for technical training.

Leaving the question of strictly practical subjects, a great waste of valuable time is to be observed in the treatment of those subjects intended to educate the faculties rather than the intellect. There seems to be a spirit abroad,—a progressive one indeed but calculated to destroy its own end,—which prompts teachers and inspectors to give hand-and-eye training through several media. As the end in view is the same for all media, though the methods are diverse, surely a more efficient training is possible with one medium than with several. If one is always learning the rudiments effectual training is not to be expected. The writer is alluding more particularly to the subject of drawing, which lends itself to such different treatment in outline, mass-drawing, object-drawing, nature-drawing, and brush-drawing, as well as mechanical drawing. The common-sense method appears to be to adopt definitely one medium, such as the pencil-point or the brush, and to aim at achieving some actual training. This would, at least, be preferable to attempting more, and failing to get dexterity in the handling of any single medium.

So far as handicrafts and technical work generally are concerned, the present school hours allow no time for these subjects, and they would be better relegated to the evening school. If they are so important a factor in a sound education, then it might be necessary to make attendance at evening-schools compulsory.

The last point quoted in the extracts from the introduction to the Code, is that the child has to be fitted for the work of life. It is the future outlook of the child that should be more definitely contemplated when arranging curricula than frequently is the case. This future outlook will depend largely upon the development of individuals, mental, moral, and physical, but it will be found also that the immediate environment of a school makes for the production of fairly defined classes with similarities of taste and capacity. When these natural divisions are noted and observed, it should be easier to determine the nature of the instruction required for them. A consultative board of experts would be best fitted to choose and select methods and schemes for various districts, industrial and rural.

The child's time at a Public Elementary School must needs be limited; every subject of the curriculum must, therefore, be shown to be of value, and the value of any subject may be discounted by indifferent teaching.

The child's education should be useful to himself, and in so far as it makes him a better citizen, to the community. Poor or mechanical teaching will frustrate both these ends.—*Prefatory Memorandum for the Consideration of Teachers and Others* 1905-1906.

The writer is sensible that some points in this extract have already been dealt with, but those dealing more particularly with the nature of the teaching call for more exhaustive treatment. Few people outside the ranks of those who have the youth of this country under their care realise how precious is the time that can be devoted to instruction. It is surprising, too, what a difference the home environment makes upon the initial starting-point of different children. A child from an intelligent home begins with fair general information, but in other cases the quantity of knowledge acquired at home is so nearly approaching *nil*, that it must be absolutely discounted. As the pupil has so much to learn in so short a time, the framers of curricula must have the courage of their convictions. In the respect of simplifying the schemes they must take full advantage of the freedom the Code allows. It should be their endeavour to avoid the inclusion of two subjects or two media where *one* will achieve the desired aim. Surely, it is better to have even an incomplete policy than to adhere to ambitious schemes which the limited school hours render impracticable. It should be the first intention of those who frame the schemes to achieve thoroughness; at any cost the specious fault of sciolism should be avoided. In this matter it is idle to compare continental schools with our own, unless it be again remembered that on the continent the children have forty hours' lessons per week as against twenty-seven in England.

On the question of indifferent teaching the writer has little or nothing to say which reflects dubiously upon the teaching profession. The mistakes of method are due rather to the overburdening of subjects and the rush entailed by modern curricula, than to any lack of practical knowledge or enthusiasm. Elementary schools, it is probable, in spite of the enormous practical difficulties of the work, are the best-taught schools in existence. They are the only institutions in our educational system for which the teachers are specially trained in their profession; and, when the mental level of the children and the size of classes are taken into consideration, the folk-schools, judged by this comparative standard, are the most efficient of any.

It would be difficult to find a serious fault in the capable instruction given by the bulk of the conscientious teachers in elementary schools. There is, perhaps, a somewhat slavish adherence to "set" teaching. By this the writer implies a willingness to yield to that five-fingered claw which threatens pedagogy—the Herbartian system. When sequence is sacrificed to the five notes, "preparation," "presentation," "association," "formulation," and "application," of the Herbartian key-board, the result is to real intelligent teaching as the achievements of a mechanical vamped are to those of the gifted musical performer. A professor of Delhi University recently visited some of the best of our elementary schools. He had previously seen continental schools at work, and the fact which impressed him most in English schools was that the teachers seldom employ text-books; and he was much struck with the high standard of intelligent teaching. Yet, in this superiority to the employment of text-books for class-teaching lurks one of the gravest and most specious dangers to efficient instruction. For not infrequently it happens that the teacher works and the children look complacently on at his labours. Indeed, it is scarcely an exaggeration to say that present methods have so far departed from the old mechanical principles that the children are overtaught. It is to this system of "spoon-feeding" that the writer ascribes the lack of initiative, and the prevalence of superficiality amongst those who have recently left school. The motto of instruction should be "Help the child to teach himself"; it is too frequently rendered in practice as, "Teach the child."

There is yet another menace to efficient teaching. It exists in the mental attitude of numerous teachers towards His Majesty's Inspector. Most inspectors nowadays really do aim at being expert advisers rather than agents of an inquisition which happily is past. Yet many teachers—the writer says this advisedly—many teachers of to-day, in their anxiety to satisfy the Board of Education visitors, assist the scholars to carry out an unmanageable curriculum to an unwarranted degree. The result is a fictitious standard of child capacity which is calculated to mislead inspectors. Needlework is a subject which lends itself specially to this practice. In schools where garments of such intricate workmanship, and calling for such technical knowledge are shown, the material is often fixed, and pinned, and tacked, before the child begins each stage of the work. Children assisted

in this way will be incapable of making the simplest garments for themselves when they have left school. It were surely better to adopt less ambitious schemes, to discard the ornate garments prepared annually for the delectation of the inspector, and to ensure that the girls shall leave school able to cut out, fix, and finish the simpler articles necessary to everyday life. Meanwhile, this fixing and cutting-out entails, on the part of the teacher, hours and hours of useless work. No one would think of teaching the older children to draw simple objects by tracing the copy on semi-transparent paper with the original underneath. Yet this practice of attempting the unattainable by means of expert assistance is quite usual, and where one teacher thus sets up a fictitious standard of child capacity, others are compelled to do likewise. Needlework is a practical subject, and should be dealt with practically.

The work of the elementary teacher from the nature of the task, bristles with numerous difficulties. If those who counselled the various wild theoretical suggestions which are rife to-day had any ideas as to the practicability of their suggestions, many of the manufactured difficulties would die a natural death. What is practicable in the nursery often cannot apply to the large classes in vogue in our schools. Teachers have to master a peculiar art, the art of class-teaching. The magnitude of this task can be guessed from the fact that a certificated teacher is understood to be capable of educating simultaneously as many as sixty differing intellects and temperaments. Class-teaching with modern educational methods has developed into an attempt to give individual attention to all the members of a regiment at the same time. In a well-meant anxiety to avoid mechanical teaching and learning by rote, text-books have been largely discarded with a resultant loss of practicability. In this matter it is time the policy were changed; the pendulum has swung too far into the realms of the theoretical; it is time it returned to the regions of the possible. If efficiency is to be the aim, a sane balance must be adjusted between the theoretical and the practicable.

Thoreau says (and his suggestion has been ridiculed often enough) that it is better for a boy to make his own jack-knife from the ore which he has dug and smelted, than to study a science academically. Is it then true that the experience of others is never to be utilised by them that follow? Must each one "take-off" at the same point? Surely not. Yet herein

lies the crucial mistake of present-day method. *Ars longa, vita brevis* ; and if the boy has not the time to make his own jack-knife, let him at least acquire the *nous* to make it in after-life (if he still hankers after it) ; but if he is never to benefit by the lessons of the past, he will never get beyond scratching the earth to obtain the various ores required for the many educational jack-knives which it is piously intended he should manufacture.

Before leaving this part of the subject, consideration should be given to the "utility of the education." If the schooling of the child is to fit him "to be useful to himself, and in so far as it makes him a better citizen, to the community," it will be found necessary to approach the task with more utilitarian leanings than it is fashionable to hold. The valuable suggestions to teachers and others are very clear on this point, yet the way is much blocked by academic ideals. Still in some corner of the educational edifice room should be definitely reserved for the inculcation of real citizenship to the boys, and practical domestic economy to the girls. It should be remembered, too, that England is so far behind her continental rivals, that she still allows her sons and daughters to be employed at various occupations during the years of school-life. This particular legacy from the past requires immediate and complete removal.

It would be well, when discussing how the aims of the Board of Education actually work out in our schools, to assess the amount of instruction which can effectively be imparted. Under the old *régime*, which to-day is so mercilessly criticised, the child *did* leave school able to read intelligently, to write a straightforward letter, and to make such computations as are necessary in daily life. To say the same of children taught under the new system would be to make a hardy statement. The writer is conscious that he is open to the charge of being a reactionist, but the old *thorough* system of the elementary school (omitting of course the examination curse) has much to commend it. And surely, almost anything is better than the hazy third-rate grammar-school education which nowadays is attempted. If the result of the suggestive instruction affected to-day were a real intelligent love of learning, there would not be a word to say against it. But in the face of an absence of this, such loose instruction is much to be reprehended.

Coming, then, to more definite discussion of the curriculum, the subject which is primarily and unquestionably indispensable

is English—the subject which corresponds to *mother-tongue* or *native language* on continental time-tables. What a suitable mastery of English implies is sufficiently well stated in a review of an American book on the teaching of English:—“Mastery of a language consists in (i) the ability of the individual to understand the thoughts of others, whether spoken or written; (ii) his ability to express his own thoughts through written or spoken words; (iii) his ability to gain æsthetic pleasure through his native literature. So far as they go, these three sum up well the objects we should have in view in teaching our mother tongue.” The first and third of these points enumerated above are to be attained through intelligent reading, and it follows that this is the most important subject of the elementary school-course. Not only is reading the means of acquiring almost all knowledge, but it furnishes one of the greatest joys of life. Properly taught, it develops taste and judgment in the individual, and should inculcate patriotism in its most lofty ideals. It were better to study history and geography solely through the medium of good reading, than that reading itself should be crowded out. Nor can anything assist the judgment and stimulate the imagination more than carefully selected literature. The second object enumerated above in the discussion of *native language* is to be attained by the study of composition. Written English, next to articulate speech, is the chief medium for exchanging ideas, and is an important aid to observation inasmuch as its employment gives the power of expressing what has been observed. We have to-day, in business and social relations, a need for brief, trenchant statements; and the ability to frame these can only come with practice.

How far formal grammar should be taught it is difficult to say. Certainly only as the logic of the elementary school has it any great educational value, for a knowledge of the rules of a language is by no means indispensable to its correct usage.

In Norwegian schools, one does not find the word *Arithmetic* upon the time-table. The adoption of the decimal system has led to such immense saving of time in this branch of instruction, that it appears in a very secondary place under the title of *Counting*. In view of the crowded state of the courses in English schools, it is a pity that the introduction of the decimal system in its entirety is so long delayed. Arithmetic as taught

now has an importance as the mathematics of the elementary school, just as grammar is its logic ; but the relative values of arithmetic in school and in after-life differ very widely.

Without debating hand-and-eye training minutely, whether as drawing or manual instruction, it should be the aim in a school course so to teach any of the selected subjects, that there shall be no contempt acquired for manual work in after life :

The relative value of manual labour and clerical work adjusts itself in later years when the factory boy has become a man and receives a pound a week or more wages than the genteel clerk, though the latter looks down on the former all the same. No one can deny the existence of this unfortunate relation between manual and clerical labour, and the teacher can do much to break down the barrier The foolish father who "does not intend his boys to work as he had to work," should be completely disillusioned, and the school which can only point to a row of grinning clerks as its greatest achievement, should be brutally discouraged.

In framing a school-course, a rigorous effort should be made to preserve the balance between the various departments of instruction. Sir Joshua Fitch's remarks in this connection are of great significance :

As each new subject demands attention, ask to what department of school work it belongs, and what present study in that department can be safely dropped, or rather absorbed and superseded by the higher or new study So long as a new subject is a fair intellectual equivalent for its predecessor, calls into action the same sort of force and utilises former knowledge, we need not be afraid of introducing it, or of abandoning for a time the pursuit of some other which we value.

The general conclusion arrived at would seem to be that it is preferable at the present time to restrict our schools to a somewhat modest, unambitious aim, at least until generations of thinking men and women have replaced the unthinking generality of to-day. The effect of the habits of existing classes upon the mental powers of unborn generations is insufficiently realised. It would be less calculated to harm, if the mental state of our present children be not taxed beyond their power. A fuller education should be possible for the children of the next generation. What we of this decade are more particularly concerned with, is to fit the child with the means of educating himself, and to give him the incentive to do so. To quote Fitch again : "A school is a very unsatisfactory institution, and fails to fulfil its highest function if, however it may succeed in impart-

ing knowledge, it does not also succeed in imparting a thirst for more, or at least a dawning sense of the inward need for mental and spiritual cultivation, whether such cultivation bears any visible relation to success in life or not."

In this paper there may be nothing new ; yet, if it should help to throw a flicker of sadly-needed light upon a subject of the highest national import, it will have served its purpose. By a more careful selection of curricula, in a more disinterested choice of subjects, and through a wiser consideration of the essentials of an elementary education, the relative failure of the people's schools may in the near future be transmuted into a triumphant success.

WILLIAM J. BATCHELDER

THE GOLD-SEEKER

THE night had fallen over the harbour before the winch began to rattle. The stars came out, calm and golden, shaking little tracks in the sea ; in the tiers of ships shone the riding-lights ; to the westward, where the Point jutted out, the great golden light of Negra winked and glimmered as it revolved. It was a still night but for the noise of the surf, which beat continually, like the marching of an army, along the line of the coast. In one of the tiers of ships there was a sing-song. A crew had gathered on the forecastle head, to beat their pannikins to the stars. The words of their song floated out into the darkness, full of a haunting beauty which thrilled and satisfied me. There was something in the night, in the air, in the beauty of the town, and in the sweetness of the sailors' singing, which made me sorry to be leaving. I should have liked to have gone ashore again, to the Calle del Inca, where the cafés and taverns stood. I should have liked to have seen those stately pale women, in their black robes, with the scarlet roses in their hair, swaying slowly on the stage to the clicking of the castanets. I should have liked to have taken part in another wild dance among the tables of the wine-shops. I was sorry to be leaving.

When the winch began to clank, as the cable was hove in, I gathered up my lead-line, and went to the leadsman's dicky, or little projecting platform, on the starboard side. I was to be the leadsman that night and as we should soon be moving, I made the breast-rope secure, and stood by.

Presently the bell of the engine-room clanged, and there came a wash abaft as the screws thrashed. The ship trembled, as the turbulent trampling of the engines shook her. The bell clanged again ; the water below me gleamed and whitened ; the dark body of the steamer, with her lines of lit ports, swept slowly across the

lights in the harbour ; the trampling of the engines steadied, and took to itself a rhythm. We were off. I cast an eye astern at the little town I was so sad to leave, and caught a glimpse of a path of churned water, broadening astern of us. A voice sounded from the promenade deck behind me. "Zat light, what you call 'eem?"

I could not answer. My orders were to keep strict silence. The point of an umbrella took me sharply below the shoulders. "What you call 'eem—zat light? Ze light zere?"

I wondered if I could swing my lead on to him ; it was worth trying. Again came the umbrella ; and again the bell of the engine-room clanged.

"Are you ready there with the lead?" came the mate's voice above me. "All ready with the lead, sir." "What have we now?" I gathered forward and swung the lead. I could not reach the umbrella-man, even with my spare line. Once, twice, thrice I swung, and pitched the plummet well forward into the bow-wash.

"By the deep, eight, sir."

Again the bell clanged ; the ship seemed to tremble and stop. "Another cast now, quickly." "And a half, seven, sir." As I hauled in, I again tasted the umbrella, and another question came to me : "What 'ave you do? Why 'ave you do zat?" I swore under my breath. "Are you asleep there, leadsman?" The mate was biting his finger-ends. I sent the lead viciously into the sea. "Quarter, less seven, sir." "Another cast, smartly, now." Rapidly I hauled in, humming an old ballad to myself. "We'll have the ship ashore," I repeated. There was a step on the deck behind me, and again came the voice : "Ze man, ze man zere, what 'ave he do? Why 'ave 'e go like so?" "Won't you pass further aft, sir?" said a suave voice. "You're interrump'in' the leadsman." It was one of the quartermasters. Once again the lead flew forward. "By the mark, seven, sir."

There was a pause ; then came the voice again : "I go zees way?" "Yes, zees way," said the quartermaster. The steps of the umbrella-man passed away aft. "Zees way," said the quartermaster, under his breath, "zees way! You gawdem Dago!" I could have hugged the fellow.

"What now?" said the old man, leaning over from the bridge. I cast again. "And a half, eight, sir." "We're clear," said the voice above me. "'Speed ahead, Mr. Jenkins." I

gathered up my line. The engine-room bell clanged once more; the ship seemed to leap suddenly forward; in a few seconds, even as I coiled my line, the bow-wash broadened to a roaring water. The white of it glimmered and boiled, and spun away from us, streaked with fires. Across the stars above us the mists from the smoke-stack stretched in a broad cloud. Below me the engines trampled thunderously. Ahead there were the lights, and the figure of the look-out, and the rush and hurry of the water. Astern, far astern already, were the port, the ships at anchor, and the winking light on the Point. A bugle abaft called the passengers to dinner, and I watched them as they went from their cabins. A lady, in a blue gown, with a shawl round her head, was talking to a man in evening dress. "Isn't it interesting," she remarked, "to hear them making the soundings?" The white shirt was politely non-committal; he spoke as though soundings were a new kind of soup. "Aft there, two of you," said a hard voice, "and trice the ladder up. Smartly now." The lady in the blue dress stopped to watch us.

I did not see the umbrella-man again, until the next day when I passed him on the hurricane deck. He was looking at the coast through a pair of binoculars. We were running to the north, in perfect Pacific weather, under a soft blue sky that was patrolled by little soft white clouds. The land lay broad to starboard, a land of yellow hills, with surf-beaten outliers of black reef; here and there we passed villages in the watered valleys, each with its white-washed church and copper smeltry. The umbrella-man was looking beyond these, at the hills.

He was a little man, this man who had prodded me. He had a long pale face and pale eyes, a long, reddish beard, and hair rather darker, both hair and beard being sparse. He was a fidgetty person, always twitching with his hands, and he walked with something of a strut, as though the earth belonged to him. He snapped-to the case of his binoculars as though he had sheathed a sword.

Later in the day, after supper, in the second dog-watch, as I sat smoking on the fore-coamings, he came up to me and spoke to me. "You know zees coas?" he asked. Yes, I knew the coast. "What you zink?" he asked; "you like 'eem?" No, I didn't like 'eem. "Ah," he said, "You 'ave been wizzin?" I asked him what he meant. "Wizzin," he repeated, "wizzin, in ze contry. You 'ave know ze land, ze peoples?" I growled

that I had been within, to Lima, and to Santiago, and that I had been ashore at the Chincha Islands. "Ah," he said, with a strange quickening of interest, "you 'ave been to Lima ; you like 'eem?" No, I didn't like 'eem. "But you 'ave been wizzin, wizzin Lima, wizzin ze contry?" No, I had not. "I go wizzin," he said proudly. "It is because I go ; zat is why I ask. Zere is few 'ave gone wizzin." An old quartermaster walked up to us. "There's very few come back, sir," he said. "Them Indians :"— "Ah, ze Indians," said the little man, scornfully, "ze Indians ; I zeenk nozzin of ze Indians." "Beg pardon, sir," said the old sailor, "they're a tough crowd, them copper fellers." "I no understan'," said the Frenchman. "They pickle people's heads," said the old sailor, "in the sand or somethin'. They keep for ever pretty near when once they're pickled. They pickle everyone's head and sell 'em in Lima ; I've knowed 'em get a matter of three pound for a good head." "Heads?" said another sailor. "I had one myself once. I got it at Tacna, but it wasn't properly pickled or something—it was a red-headed beggar the chap as owned it—I had to throw it away. It got too strong for the crowd," he explained. "Ah, zose Indians," said the Frenchman. "I 'ave 'eard ; zey tell me, zey tell me at Val-paraiso. But ah, it ees a fool ; it ees a fool ; zere is no Indians." "Beg pardon, sir," said the old sailor, "but if you go up among them jokers, you'll have to watch out they don't pickle you. You'll have to look slippy with a gun, sir." "Ah, a gon," he answered, "a gon. I was not be bozzered wiz a gon. I 'ave what you call 'eem—peestol." He produced a boy's derringier, which might have cost about ten dollars, Spanish dollars, in the pawnshops of Santiago. "Peestol," murmured a sailor, gasping, as he shambled forward to laugh, "peestol, the gawdem Dago's balmy."

During the next few days I saw the Frenchman frequently. He was a wonder to us, and his plans were discussed at every meal, and in every watch below. In the dog-watches he would come forward, with his eternal questions : "What is wizzin ? In ze contry?" We would tell him, "Indians," or "highwaymen," or "a push of high-binders"; and he would answer : "It ees nozzin, it ees a fool." Once he asked us if we had heard of any gold being found "wizzin." "Gold?" said one of us. "Gold? O' course there's gold, any God's quantity. Them Incas ate gold ; they're buried in it." "'Ave you know

zem, ze Incas?" he asked eagerly. "I seen a tomb of theirs once," said the sailor; "it were in a cave, like the fo'c'sle yonder, and full of knittin'-needles." "What is zem?" said the Frenchman. The sailor shambled below to his chest, and returned with a handful of little sticks round which some balls of coloured threads were bound. "Knittin'-needles," said the sailor. "Them ain't no knittin'-needles," said another; "them's their way of writin'." "Go on with yer," said the first; "them's knittin'-needles. Writin'? How could them be writin'?" "Well, I heard tell once," replied the other. "It ees zeir way of writing," said the Frenchman; "I 'ave seen; zat is zeir way of writing; ze knots is zeir letters." "Bloomin' funny letters, I call 'em," said the needles-theorist. "You and your needles," said the other. "Now, what d'ye call 'em?" The bell upon the bridge clanged. "Eight bells," said the company; "aft to muster, boys." The bugle at the saloon-door announced supper.

We were getting pretty well to the north—Mollendo, or thereabouts—when I had my last conversation with the Frenchman. He came up to me one night, as I sat on the deck to leeward of the winch, keeping the first watch as snugly as I could. "You know zees coast long?" he asked. I had not. Then came the never ceasing, "'Ave you know of ze Incas?" Yes, lots of general talk; and I had seen Inca curios, mostly earthenware, in every port in Peru. "You 'ave seen gold?" No; there was never any gold. The Spaniards made a pretty general average of any gold there was. "It ees a fool," he answered. "I tell you," he went on, "it ees a fool. Zey have say zat; zey 'ave all say zat; it ees a fool. Zere is gold. Zere is a hundred million pounds; zere is twenty tusan million dollars; zere is El Dorado. Beyond ze mountains zere is El Dorado; zere is a town of gold. Zey say zere is no gold? Zere is. I go to fin' ze gold; zat is what I do; I fin' ze gold, I, Paul Bac." "Alone?" I gasped. "I, Paul Bac," he answered.

I looked at him a moment. He was a little red-haired man, slightly made, but alert and active-looking. He knew no Spanish, no Indian dialects, and he had no comrade. I told him that I thought he didn't know what he was doing. "Ha!" he said. "Listen: I go to Payta; I go by train to Chito; zen I reach ze Morona River; from zere I reach Marinha. Listen: El Dorado is between ze Caqueta and ze Putumayo Rivers, in ze

forest." I would have asked him how he knew, but I had to break away to relieve the look-out. I wished the little man good-night, and I never spoke with him again.

I thought of him all that watch, as I kept scanning the seas. I should be going up and down, I thought, landing passengers through surf, or swaying bananas out of launches, or crying the sounds as we came to moorings. He would be going on under the stars, full of unquenchable hope, and stumbling on the bones of kings. He would be wading across bogs, through rivers and swamps, through unutterable and deathly places, singing some song, and thinking of the golden city. He was a pilgrim, a poet, a person to reverence. And if he got there, if he found El Dorado—but that was absurd. I thought of him sadly, with the feeling that he had learned how to live, and that he would die by applying his knowledge. I wondered how he would die. He would be alone there, in the tangle, stumbling across creepers; the poisoned dart would hit him in the back, from the long, polished blow-pipe, such as I had seen in the museums. He would fall on his face, among the jungle. Then the silent Indian would hack off his head with a flint, and pickle it for the Lima markets. He would never get to the Caqueta. Or perhaps he would be caught in an electric storm, an *aire*, as they call them, and be stricken down among the hills on his way to Chito. More probably he would die of hunger or thirst, as so many had died before him. I remembered a cowboy whom I had found under a thorn-bush in the Argentine. Paul Bac would be like that cowboy; he would run short of water, and kill his horse for the blood, and then go mad and die.

I was in my bunk when he went ashore at Payta, but a fellow in the other watch told me how he left the ship. There was a discussion in the fore-castle that night as to the way the heads were prepared. Some said it was sand; some said it was the leaf of the *puro* bush; one or two held out for a mixture of pepper and nitrate. One man speculated as to the probable price the head would fetch; and the general vote was for two pounds, or two pounds ten. "It wouldn't give me no pleasure," said one of us, "to have that ginger-nob in my chest." "Nor me, it wouldn't," said another; "I draw the line at having a corpse on my tobacker." "And I do," said several. Clearly the Frenchman was destined for a town museum.

It was more than a year after that that I heard of the end of

the El Dorado hunter. I was in New York when I heard it, serving behind the bar of a saloon. One evening, as I was mixing cocktails, I heard myself hailed by a customer; and there was Billy Neeld, one of our quartermasters, just come ashore from an Atlantic transport boat. We had a drink together, and yarned of old times. The names of our old shipmates were like incantations. The breathing of them brought the past before us; the past which was so recent, yet so far away; the past which is so dear to a sailor and so depressing to a landsman. So and so was dead, and Jimmy had gone among the Islands, and Dick had pulled out for home because "he couldn't stick that Mr. Jenkins." Very few of them remained on the Coast; the Brothers of the Coast are a shifting crowd.

"D'ye remember the Frenchman," I asked, "the man who was always asking about the Incas?" "The ginger-headed feller?" "Yes, a little fellow." "A red-headed, ambitious little runt? I remember him," said Billy; "he left us at Payta, the time we fouled the launch." "That's the man," I said; "have you heard anything of him?" "Oh, he's dead, all right," said Billy: "His mother came out after him; there was a piece in THE CHILE TIMES about him." "He was killed, I suppose?" "Yes, them Indians got him, somewhere in Ecuador, Tommy Hains told me. They got his head back, though. It was being sold in the streets; his old mother offered a reward, and the Dagoes got it back for her. He's dead all right, he is; he might a' known as much, going alone among them Indians. Dead? I guess he is dead; none but a red-headed runt'd have been such a lunk as to try it." "He was an ambitious lad," I said. "Yes," said Billy, "he was. Them ambitious fellers, they want the earth, and they get their blooming heads pickled; that's what they get by it. Here's happy days, young feller."

JOHN MASEFIELD

